THE FIRST PRINCIPLES OF NEW-ENGLAND,

Concerning

The Subject of Baptiſme & Communion of Churches.

Collected partly out of the Printed Books, but chiefly out of the *Original Manuſcripts* of the *Firſt* and chiefe *Fathers* in the *New-Engliſh Churches*; With the Judgment of Sundry Learned Divines of the *Congregational Way* in *England*, Concerning the ſaid Queſtions.

Publiſhed for the Benefit of thoſe who are of the Riſing Generation in New-England.

By INCREASE MATHER, Teacher of a Church in Bolton in *New-England*

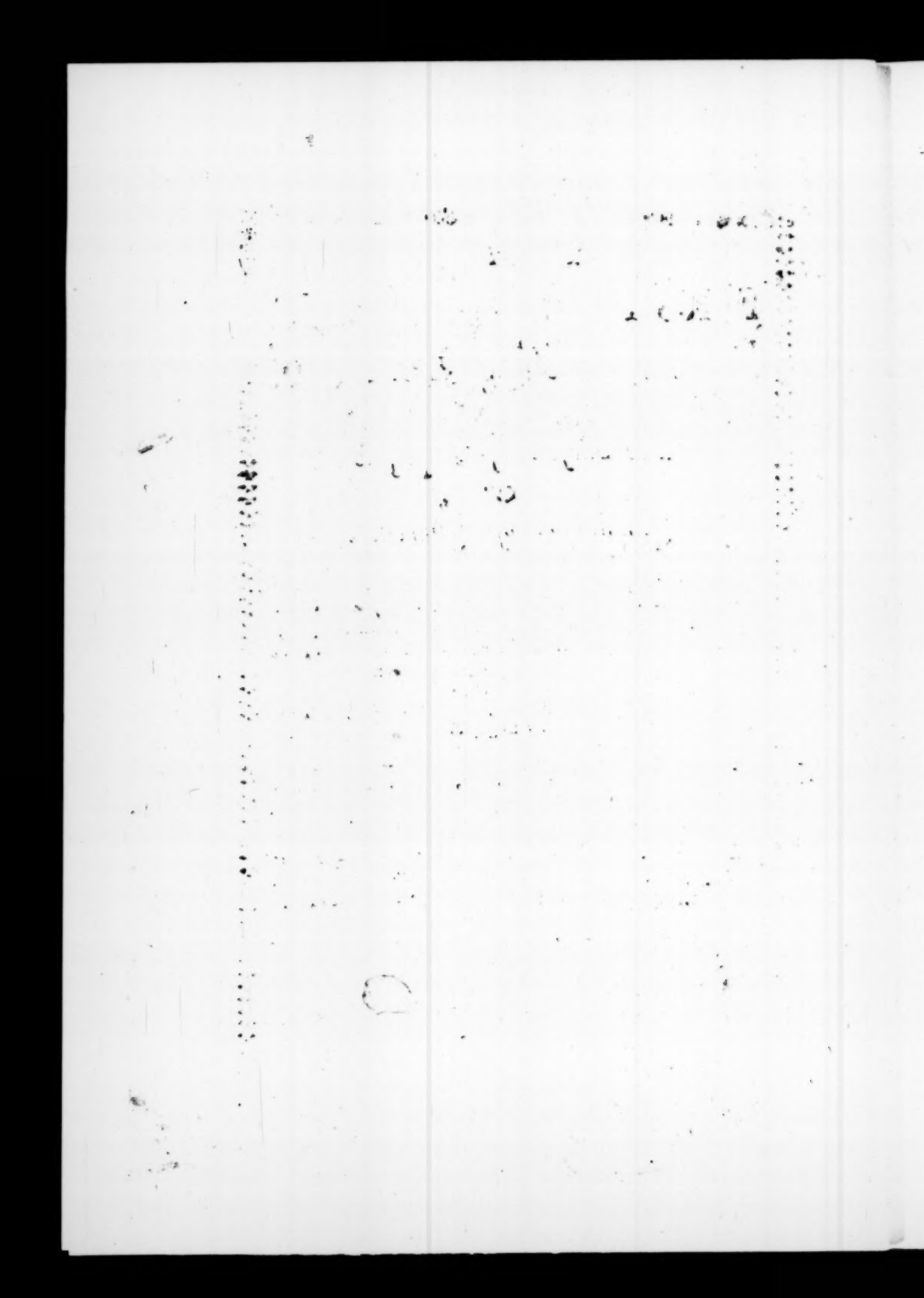
Deut. 32.7. *Remember the dayes of old,---Aske thy Father and he will ſhew thee, thy Elders & they will tell thee.*

Pſal. 102.18. *This ſhall be written for the Generation to come.*

Nihil mihi Authoritatis aſſumo, ſed quæ ab alijs diſperſa velut in ordinem Epitomata, Conſcribo. *Veget. L. 1. C. 8.*

CAMBRIDGE

Printed by *Samuel Green*, 1672.



CConcerning the enſuing Collection of Teſtimonies, *which are expreſſive of the Judgements of the firſt and chief of the Fathers in the New Engliſh Churches (as alſo of ſundry others that are Pillars amongſt thoſe of the* true Congregational way) *about the* Subject of Baptiſme and the Communion of Churches, *if any ſhould have Scruples about the truth thereof, they may eaſily in part ſatisfy themſelves, by having recourſe to the* printed Books *out of which theſe paſſages are* faithfully excerped. *And as for thoſe things which are (as moſt of the* ſubſequent Collection *is) taken from* Manuſcripts, *I have by me the* Original Scripts, *only ſome few of them are in other hands, who are ready, to ſhew them unto ſuch (if any ſuch there be) as ſhall* heſitate *touching the* Fidelity *of this* publication. *As to that matter therefore no more ſhall, or needs to be ſaid.* *My deſigne at preſent is only to Commend a few things to the* ſerious and Chriſtian Conſideration *of the* Antiſynodalian Brethren. *Brethren I was once of your perſwaſion, and thence can with the more* Love and Compaſſion *ſpeak unto you. What the Arguments were which cauſed me to be of* another mind, *is not here a place to relate, but it ſhall be done* (if God permit) *elſewhere. For the preſent, let it ſuffice to be ſaid, that* Study and Prayer, and much Affliction *hath brought me to be of* another belief, *then once I was of touching the* Controverted Queſtions. *And unto you that are ſtill of the* Antiſynodalian perſwaſion, *I would in the* bowels and love of Chriſt *ſay theſe few things.*

1. Conſider that it is poſſible that you may be miſtaken in your Apprehenſions. *Many things might be mentioned to you, which ought to cauſe an* humble jealouſy *in you, leaſt it ſhould be. Were there that only* Conſideration, *that ſo many* Learned and godly men *are oppoſed, it ought to Cauſe* Trembling, *and an* holy fear in you, *leaſt your* Notions *ſhould be* Erroneous *It is a* Chriſtian Speech *and Spirit which* bleſſed Burroughs *hath in his* Excellent Irenicum (*pag. 89.*) *where he ſaith,* He that differs in his Judgement from godly learned men, had need to ſpend much Time in Prayer and Humiliation before the Lord "There is a notable Expreſſion of *Baſil* cited in an Epi-"ſtle of *Luther* to the Miniſters of *Norimberg*, who were at vari-

"variance one from another, He who will ſeparate from his Bre-
"thren, had need to Conſider many things even to anxiety, he had
"need break his ſleep many nights, and ſeek of God with many
"Tears the demonſtration of the Truth. Thus, He.

Remember that thoſe you differ from were under greater Advantages and Probabilities to underſtand the Truth then can be ſaid concerning your ſelves. For that many of the members *of the* late Synod *called to Anſwer the Queſtions concerning* the Subject of Baptiſme and Conſociation of Churches, (*beſides their eminent Piety and inlarged underſtanding and Capacity in thoſe reſpects to diſcern the Truth*) *had beſtowed much Time and pains in ſeeking and ſearching after the mind of God about theſe Queſtions, cannot be denyed. For the moſt part,* when godly, learned men miſs of the Truth, *it is in points which either they have not at all, or not* throughly *and* Impartially *ſtudied, when as the* Leaders *in the* Synod mentioned, *had moſt* induſtriouſly, *and not without* prayers *and* Tears *laboured to know the will of the Lord, concerning theſe Affairs of his* houſe, *and* Kingdome. *Nor is it to be forgotten,* how the Lord did in his Providence ſignally own that Aſſembly. *For at the Time of their* ſecond Seſſions *there was a* ſore *and* threatning drought *on the Land, whereupon that* Synod *ſet a day apart to ſeek the Lord by* Faſting *and* Prayer, *and* Immediately *upon thoſe Prayers did* the Lord give Rain from Heaven, *whereby he did from Heaven own both his Servants, and the work which they were about. And therein likewiſe we may obſerve a* divine Confutation *of thoſe Spirits, who impute our* droughts, blaſtings, *&c. to that* Aſſembly, *or to the* Doctrine *by them aſſerted and propugned. Remember alſo that there have been very* worthy men (*amongſt whom I who am Conſcious to my ſelf, that I am* the chief of Sinners, *am no way worthy to be mentioned*) *who were againſt ſuch* inlargement of Baptiſme *as the* Synod *pleads for, yet upon* ſecond and wiſeſt thoughts (Δευτέραι φρονήσεις κρείττους) *have ſeen Cauſe to change their opinion. This is true concerning ſome now at* reſt with Chriſt, *and ſundry* (amongſt whom as I ſaid I reckon not my ſelf) yet ſurviving. *Yea, it is true concerning ſome* Judicious *of the* Congregational way *in* England *as well as in* New-England. *It is a good Obſervation which I remember* Mr *Cotton hath in his Letter to* M. *Williams.* (*pag.* 12. where he argueth, that the way of the Right Separation is not of God, becauſe thoſe who in Simplicity and tenderneſs of Conſcience have been drawn into the error of that way, yet when they have grown in grace, they have alſo grown to diſcern the error of the Separation. *The ſame thing we may ſay in*

this

this Caſe; ſome who did once Conſcientiouſly and humbly according to their preſent light diſſent from the late Synod, yet as they have grown in wiſdome and grace, and ripeneſs for Heaven, the Lord hath given them for to ſee, that their Rigidity in this particular was a failing. Moreover it is a Rule as true as Ancient and Common, that whatever Opinion doth draw the maintainers of it to any abſurdities is to be ſuſpected and rejected as erroneous. It's Everlaſtingly Certain, that a falſe Concluſion can never be drawn out of true Premiſſes, *ex vero nil niſi verum*. Now ſome that with the higheſt Confidence have oppoſed the Doctrine of the Synod concerning the Subject of Baptiſme to uphold their Notions, have been forced to embrace ſuch things as are very Irrational. All theſe things being put together are enough to breed an humble, and an holy Jealouſie over your own Apprehenſions. That then is the firſt word I would ſeriouſly and affectionately Commend to your Conſideration. The ſecond word is this, Conſider that if you be miſtaken your Error hath, as things are Circumſtanced, no little evil and danger in it. For if you be miſtaken, then you oppoſe a Cauſe of Divine Grace, which to do is ſad, ſince God looks upon his Grace as his Glory, Eph. 1. 14. As Gods holineſs is dear to him, and hence any way to oppoſe that is dangerous, the ſame is to be ſaid concerning his Grace. And if you be miſtaken, you oppoſe a Cauſe of Gods Covenant, now Gods Covenant is marvellous dear unto him, and no man can daſh himſelf againſt an Intereſt of the Covenant without great hazard. And if you be miſtaken, you oppoſe an Intereſt, yea, and a great Intereſt of Chriſts Kingdome, now that muſt needs diſpleaſe the Lord, It is very obſervable, that Chriſt was never ſo angry as his own dear Diſciples, as then, when they did rigidly withhold ſome that were Children of the Kingdom, from being brought to him, Mark. 10 13, 14 why ſo even becauſe his own Intereſt was therein Concerned, men are ſoon moved, when their own Intereſt is ſtruck at, ſo was the holy heart of Chriſt much moved, becauſe when Children, were kept from him, his own Intereſt was prejudiced. Brethren, if ſo it be, that the Doctrine of the Synod be Truth, you that oppoſe it, do what in you lie to pervert juſtice an Intereſt of Chriſt, and if ſo, Chriſt is not well pleaſed with you for this thing. There is not a more awful Scripture in all the Book of God, then that where it is ſaid concerning Chriſts Kingdom, that whoſoever ſhall fall on this ſtone ſhall be broken, Matt. 21. 44. Brethren, one word let me in the Bowels of the Lord ſay to you, And I ſpeak it not with a deſire to grieve or offend any of you, but if my heart deceive me not, Love to Chriſt, and to you, and to the

ſucceeding

ſucceeding Generation *in* New-England *cauſeth me to ſpeak it, it is only this*, oh tremble, leſt this very Error of yours prove the breaking, and the ruine of your poor Poſterity. *They are* Solemn *and* weighty words, *and I muſt Confeſs have alwayes had an* aweful Impreſſion *upon my Conſcience, which the* Elders *have in the* Preface *to the* late Synod Book; (*pag.* 12.) "ſhould (*ſay they*) the Church education of "your Children be by the want of your hearty Concurrence rendred "either infeaſable or ineffectual, ſhould they live as Lambs in a large "Paſture for want of your Agreement to own them of the Flock; "we beſeech you Conſider how uncomfortable the Accompt hereof "will be another day. *Truly when I think,* (*and I often think of it*) ſeriouſly and ſadly with my ſelf, *that in a Plantation of Religion* (*for ſuch* New-England *was*) *the Generality of the Inhabitants ſhould be in the Condition of* Infidels, *that the* Poſterity of a People profeſſing Godlineſs, yea, of the moſt eminent Profeſſors in the whole World, ſhould in our Age be as *Infidels* even not ſo much as within the *Compaſs* of the *viſible Church*, or have *the Livery and Character belonging to Chriſtians upon them*, whereby ſuch are diſtinguiſhed from the *Infidel and Pagan World*, what it ha's to others I know not, but to me it ha's a *moſt formidable appearance*, Remember alſo that the light ha's been forth, in which reſpect, *Now for you to oppoſe the Truth, after that* Convincing Teſtimonies *have been given to it by the* Lords Servants, *will be farr more dangerous and provoking to the Lord, then in former Times amongſt us*, when theſe things had not been ſo fully enquired into, as of late *through the good hand of Divine Providence* it ha's been. *A third word which I would ſay is, ſtudy well the point of Infant Baptiſme. Acquaint your ſelves with the Scripture proofs for that Ordinance*, I muſt acknowledge that that ha's been no ſmall Confirmation to me. *This I find that there is haraly an Argument produced againſt ſuch Inlargement, as is by the Synod aſſerted, but what the* Antipædo-Baptiſts *make uſe of to ſerve their turn.* Alſo that the Arguments which do demonſtrate *Pædo-Baptiſme in general*, do (for the moſt part) prove that Baptiſme ought to be Adminiſtred in the *Latitude* which the *Synod* pleads for. *The laſt word which I ſhall ſay is this, uſe all means of Gods appointing, that you may come to underſtand the Truth in this matter.* There have been ſome to my knowledge (and becauſe I know there have been ſome, I am apt to think there may be many more then I know of) *that have exclaimed much againſt the* Synod Book, *as if it were an Apoſtacy and Impurity*, &c. That yet upon Examination have Confeſſed, that they never read

the

the Book, much leſs have they read other things written in *defence* thereof; and how farr then have they been from reading theſe things, *with Prayers and Tears, and Humiliations before the Lord, oh! if Brethren would prove all things, and pray unceſſantly over what they do, and add deep Humiliations to their Prayers, and depend upon Chriſt for light*, we might hope that God would either diſcover his Truth to them, in the very things they are ſearching after, or in ſome other matters better for them to know, and in the mean Time help them to carry it with *that Chriſtian moderation that becometh Saints*, Prov.2.3,4,5. Ezek.43.11. Phil.3.15,16.

As for the Reaſons which have induced me to this *enſuing Collection*, beſides thoſe *general motives* mentioned in the *Introduction*, the ſpecial Conſiderations which haue prevailed with me were, Firſt, that I might pleaſe God in *obeying the fifth Commandment by vindicating the honour of my Fathers.* (2 *dly.*) in that a ſpecial Advantage has been put into my hands for this undertaking, by Reaſon of my Acquaintance with the *Manuſcripts* of both my Fathers, (I mean my Father *Cotton*, and my Father *Mather*) from whence theſe *Teſtimonies* are for the moſt part produced. [3 *dly.*] My Father when he was leaving the world, did Commend it as his *dying Counſel* to me, that I ſhould endeavour *the good of the Riſing Generation in this Country, and in ſpecial, that they might be brought under the Government of Chriſt in his Church, and when grown up and qualified, as is in the late Synod Book expreſſed, have Baptiſme for their Children.* What Impreſſion thoſe words, ſince they were the words of a Father, *and of ſuch a Father, and dying words alſo, have had upon my heart, is known to the Father of Spirits, who only ſearcheth hearts, and Converſeth with the Souls of men, nor am I able to utter it.* [4 *ly.*] *It is known unto thoſe few in the world, that have any knowledge of ſo obſcure and inconſiderable a perſon as my ſelf, that I have of late been near unto Death*, God having brought me back again, as it were out of the Grave, I muſt needs have had many thoughts with my ſelf, *what I ſhould do for God, and for his people? yea, for his People, whoſe Prayers have ſaved my Life. Now I would fain hope what is here done will be a Service for Chriſt, and for theſe his Churches, and for that Generation whereof I am, when I ſhall ſleep with my Fathers.*

There is alſo publiſhed herewith, the *Subſtance* of a Letter written by Mr. *Mitchel, late faithful and famous Paſtor of the Church* in *Cambridg.* Although I cannot ſay but that I was [albeit he knew not that] when that Letter was ſent to me, inclining to the ſame

Apprehenſi on

To the Reader.

Apprehenſion about the Subject of Baptiſme, which at preſent I am of, yet the Arguments therein ſuggeſted, were I muſt Confeſs weighty and powerful Conſiderations with me, and I believe will be ſo to others that duely weigh matters in the Ballance of the Sanctuary, for which Cauſe principally, I have thus expoſed it to publick view. Alſo I have partly done it honoris gratia, *that I might teſtify my deep reſpect to that bleſſed man, concerning whom I may ſay as ſometimes* Beza *concerning* Calvin, Now *Mitchel* is dead, life is leſs ſweet, and death will be leſs bitter unto me.

Once for all, let me deſire the Reader to take notice that I do not by this Collection, *concern my ſelf in the defence of every Notion or Argument, or Principle, that is by any of thoſe Worthies inſiſted on, but my only deſign therein is, to ſhew that ſuch* Inlargment of Baptiſme, *and that* Conſociation of Churches, *which is in the Synod Book aſſerted is no Apoſtacy from the firſt Principles of* New-England, *nor yet any declenſion from the* Congregational way. *Now the Lord Jeſus who hath promiſed that the Spirit of Truth ſhall come, and ſhall guide into all Truth, fulfil his good word, even the Lord ſend out of his Light and his Truth, and let them lead us. Let him grant that there may be Peace and Truth in our dayes, and not only ſo, but that the Generation to come may praiſe the Lord, that it may appear, that* his Righteouſneſs is for ever, and his Salvation from Generation to Generation, *Amen, and Amen! This is the hearts deſire and Prayer of him*

From my Study in Boſton N.E. 1. of 3 d Month. 1671. } *Who is* leſs then the leaſt of all Gods mercies and Saints.

Increaſe Mather.

Errata.

p.2.l.11. for hands r. hand.
p.4.l.28. for then r. there.
p.16.l.24. Adde deus dicit.
p.21.l.p.ult. r. parente.
p.32.l.32. for ſo 24. r. Hebr. 10.24

THE FIRST PRINCIPLES OF NEW ENGLAND,

Concerning the Subject of BAPTISM

AND

COMMUNION OF CHURCHES.

THere having been ſome who have thought that the Doctrine of the late Synod Book Concerning *Baptiſm* and the Communion or *Conſociation* of Churches is an *Innovation* and *Apoſtacy* from the *firſt principles of* New England. And inaſmuch as it may be a ſpecial Service for theſe Churches, both in preſent and in after times, that men ſhould know what the *firſt Principles* touching theſe Controverſies were, Conſidering alſo, that the Lords Servants and Meſſengers are much wronged when Apoſtacy is imputed to them, upon account of the Doctrine aforeſaid, and that it will be a thing very acceptable unto God (who is diſpleaſed and diſhonoured when his faithful ones are traduced) that his Servants ſhould be *vindicated* from ſuch injurious Aſperſions: upon theſe and the like Conſiderations, we ſhall endeavour (as in the Lords holy fear) to enquire what were the firſt Principles of *New-England* concerning the Subject of Baptiſm and Communion of Churches, and leave it to

the Christian world, and to Posterity to judge who are the *Apostates*.

Now this may be done by shewing, what was the judgement of the *first Fathers* of this Country, touching the questions in Controversy. And in this ensuing *Collection of Testimonies* we shall not mention any of those Reverend Elders that are yet surviving, nor all amongst our deceased worthies, only some of *the Chief of the Fathers* of this Country.

And first, *concerning Baptism*, we shall begin with the Judgement of that man of God deservedly famous in both *Englands*, viz. Mr. *John Cotton*, late Teacher of the first Church in *Boston*. And what the Apprehension of that *Seer* was, is manifest from a Letter which is to be seen written with his own hands in the name, and with the unanimous Consent of the whole Church, which then was in this *Boston* to the Church in *Dorchester*. Because the Letter is of Ancient date, and so giveth a great light towards the clearing of the matter, which is before us, we shall therefore here insert it, word for word as it is written with Mr. *Cottons* own hand, It is that which followeth.

"To our Reverend and Beloved Brethren the Elders
"with the rest of the Church of *Dorchester*.
"*Grace and peace, from God our Father and from*
"*the Lord Iesus Christ our Saviour.*

"The Case of Conscience which you propounded to our Consider-
"ration, [to wit, whether a Grand Father being a member of a Chri-
"stian Church, might claim Baptism to his Grand-Child, whose next
"Parents be not received into Church Covenant] ha's been delibe-
"rately treated of in our Church Assembled together publickly in the
"name of Christ. And *upon due and serious discourse about the point,*
"*it seemed good unto us all with one accord*, and agreeable (as we believe)
"to the word of the Lord, that the Grand-Father may lawfully claim
"that priviledge to his Grand-child in such a Case, yet with these
"two Cautions. First, that the Grand-child baptized by right of the
"Grand-fathers Covenant, be Committed to the Grand fathers edu-
"cation; for as God in the Covenant of Grace undertaketh to be a
"God, unto the Believer and his seed, so by the Rule of Relatives, the
"Tenour of the Covenant requireth that the Believer, do undertake
"that himself and his Seed do give up themselves to become the peo-
"ple of the Lord, which he cannot undertake, in behalf of his Seed,
"unless they be committed to his education. 2. This other Caution
"also we conceive to be requisite, that the Parents of the Child, do

not

" not thereby take occaſion to neglect the due and ſeaſonable prepara-
" tion of themſelves for entrance into Covenant with God and his
" Church: theſe Cautions premiſed and obſerved, the Baptiſme of
" the Grand-child by right of his Grand-fathers Covenant, we believe
" to be warranted from the nature and tenour of the Covenant of
" Grace by this Reaſon, where there is a Stipulation of the Covenant
" on Gods part, and reſtipulation of the Covenant on mans part,
" there may be an obſignation of the Covenant on both parts, or in
" plainer words, where there is an offer of the Covenant on Gods part,
" and a receiving and undertaking of the Covenant on mans part, there
" may be a ſealing of it on both parts? But here is an offer of the
" Covenant on Gods part, *Gen. 17.7.* where God ſays, that he will be
" a God to *Abraham*, that is, to the Believer and his Seed, and by
" Seed is not there meant the next Seed only, but Seeds Seed alſo to
" many Generations, *Iſai. 59.21.* And here is likewiſe a receiving
" and undertaking of the Covenant on mans part, ſeeing the Grand-
" father receiveth the Covenant by his faith, and by the profeſſion of
" his faith, and by his deſire of the Seal of the Covenant to ſtrengthen
" his faith, and he undertaketh alſo the keeping of the Covenant, in
" bringing up his Grand-child as much as in him lies to live and walk
" as himſelf does, as one of Gods people, according to the Tenour of
" the Covenant, from whence the Concluſion evidently followeth, that
" therefore Baptiſme may there be Adminiſtred to Seal up the Cove-
"nant, where the Grand-father receives the Covenant, & undertakes to
" bring up his Grand-child in the faith and obedience of the Covenant.

" Againſt this Argument it was objected by ſome what the Apoſtle
" writes, *1 Cor. 7.14.* where if both the husband and the wife, who
" are the next Parents of the Child be unbelieving, the Child is pro-
" nounced unclean, and therefore uncapable of the holy Covenant,
" and of the holy Seal of it, whereto it was anſwered that the word in
" the Text tranſlated *unbelieving* is in the Original *Infidel*. Now
" *there is a difference between an Infidel and a Carnal Chriſtian, as then*
" *was amongſt the Jews a difference between an Heathen and a Carnal*
" *Iſraelite.* Though the Child be unclean where both the Parents
" are Pagans and Infidels, yet *we may not account ſuch Parents for Pa-*
" *gans and Infidels, who are themſelves baptized, and profeſs their belief*
" *of the Fundamental Articles of the Chriſtian Faith, and live without*
" *notorious Scandelous Crime, though they give not clear evidence of*
" *their regenerate eſtate*, nor are convinced of the neceſſity of Church
" Covenant. After this Anſwer given, there was no farther reply

"againſt the point in hand, but on the contrary, ſome of the Brethren "expreſſing their Conſents with Addition of other Reaſons, and all of "them by their ſilence, *we do therefore profeſs it to be the judgement of* "*our Church*, and as we believ agreeable to the word of God (ſuch "Cautions being obſerved as hath been mentioned) *that the Grand-* "*Father a member of the Church, may claim the priviledge of Baptiſme* "*to his Grand-Child, though his next Seed the Parents of the Child be* "*not received themſelves into Church Covenant.* Wherein nevertheleſs "we deſire, ſo to be underſtood, not as preſuming to judge others, "who happily may be of different opinion in this point, or to direct "you, who are by the grace of God given to you, able to direct your "ſelves and us alſo in the Lord, but as willing in meekneſs of wiſdome "to ſearch out the truth of God with you, and in brotherly Love to "ſatisfy your requeſt and demand touching this Queſtion.

"Now the God of truth and peace Lead you into all truth, and go "on to build up his holy Kingdome in the midſt of you in the graci- "ous Adminiſtration of all his holy Ordinances amongſt you in the "Lord Jeſus, In whom we reſt.

Boſton Decemb. the 16*th.* 1634.

Your loving Brethren
John Cotton
Tho. Oliver.
Tho. Leveret.

In the Name of the Church

Now this is a great Teſtimony, for if *Anno 1634.* which was amongſt the Primitive Times of theſe Churches, if then a Grand-Father, ſuch Cautions being obſerved, as have been mentioned, being a member of a Church might claim the Priviledge of Baptiſme to his grand Child, though his next Seed the Immediate Parents of the Child be not received themſelves into full Communion, if then alſo it were true, that there is a difference between an Infidel and a Carnal Chriſtian as then was amongſt the Jews, a difference between an Heathen and a Carnal Iſraelite, and that we may not account ſuch Parents for Pagans and Infidels, and ſo not their Children for unclean, who are themſelves baptized, and profeſs their belief of the Fundamental Articles of the Chriſtian Faith, and live without notorious ſcandalous crime, though they give not clear Evidence of their Regenerate Eſtate, if this were true doctrine, *Anno 1634.* Poſterity will ſee, who are the *Apoſtates* from the firſt Principles of *New-England*, whether they whoſe Principles are for an Enlargement of Baptiſme unto ſome, whoſe next

Parents

Parents are not fit for the Lords Supper, or they that do oppose such a practice.

There is also to be seen another large and Judicious Letter of Mr. *Cottons* written with his own hand to a Friend of his in *England* touching accommodation and Communion between those of the Presbyterian, and Congregational perswasion, The Letter bears date the 8. 11. *moneth* 1648. and therein Mr. *Cotton* delivers his judgement in twelve propositions, which are too large here to be inserted, only the eighth of these Propositions being directly to our purpose, we shall here transcribe it, The words of it are these, "If the godly members of a Congregation "formerly Subject to Episcopacy, repenting of their sinful subordinati-"on thereto shall be studious of Reformation, and shall solemnly Cove-"nant to endeavour the same, and shall choose their former godly Mi-"nisters, into the Pastors & Teachers office, it is not necessary they should "take the ignorant or Carnal members of the Parish into the fellowship "of this renewed Election of their Ministers, and yet it is not impro-"bable, but the Ministers may perform some Ministerial acts to them, "as not only to preach the word to them, but (happily) also to baptize "their Children. For such members are like the Church members, "with us baptized in their Infancy, yet not received to the Lords Sup-"per, when they come to Age, nor admitted to fellowship of voting "in Admissions, Elections, Censures, till they come to profess their "faith, and repentance, and lay hold of the Covenant of their Parents "before the Church. And yet they being not cast out of the Church, "nor the Covenant thereof, their Children may be capable of the first "Seal of the Covenant, so in this Case, till the Parents themselves grow "Scandalous, and thereby cast off, out of the Covenant of the Church.

Also to a Reverend person yet surviving in this Country, who in a Letter bearing date, 4. 4 *Moneth* 1649. propounded this Question, *A Father that was in the Iudgement of Charity* "one that feared the "Lord, but no Church member, dies and gives his Little Infant to a "Church member and Brother of ours, which brother having no Child "of his own gladly accepts it, the question is whether such an adopted "Child, may by the will *of Christ be baptized or not.* Mr. *Cottons* An-"swer was in these words, *your Case of baptizing of the Child*, of one "fearing God, and in his death giving his Child to a Church member, "&c. I propounded to some of our fellow Elders, Mr. *Wilson*. Mr. "*Eliot*. and I think Mr. *Mather*. and as I remember, they all incli-"ned to the Affirmative, their ground was the Text in *Gen.* 17. 12, 13. "for mine own part I lean to the Affirmative; as you put the Case,

" the Parent of this Child was not an Indian or Pagan, but a Chriſtian,
" and baptized himſelf, and ſo confederate with ſuch a Church as we
" renounce not, and I do not diſſwade the miniſtring of the Seal of the
" Covenant, where the Covenant it ſelf is not wanting, *&c.*

Likeviſe in another Letter, which is extant, under Mr. *Cottons* own hand writing, to one who thus objected, Carnal children are not fit to renew their Covenant, whilſt they are unfit to partake in the Seal of the Covenant, *&c.* He replies in theſe words, " Though they be not
" fit to make ſuch profeſſion of viſible faith, as to admit them to the
" Lords Table, yet they may make profeſſion full enough to receive
" them to Baptiſme, or to the ſame eſtate *Iſmael* ſtood in after Cir-
" cumciſſion.

And to one who complained of being in the dark about the truth aſſerted in Mr. *Cottons* printed Book concerning the Baptiſme of *Infants*, and that amongſt other made this Objection, " when (ſaid that
" Scrupler) a child comes to know that his Parents are no viſible
" Saints, but appear to be contrary both in Life and Doctrine, and the
" children had only words and water poured on them, how came theſe
" perſons to have right to it, the Parents having no viſible faith to act
" in that Ordinance, and their children likewiſe being uncapable, to
" hold forth the acts of faith before men. He thus Anſwereth, *Iero-*
" *boam and his wife were neither of them viſible Saints*, in your Senſe,
" but appeared to be contrary both in *Life* and *Doctrine*, yet the *Cir-*
" *cumciſion* of their *Son* was not in vain to him, *1 Kings 14. 13.* In
" this *Caſe* when the faith of the Parents is wanting, and yet they ſtill
" live within the *Pale* of the *Church*, though the *Church* be *Corrupt*,
" and the *Parents* alſo, yet here the *Speech* of the *Apoſtle* takes place,
" what though ſome believed not, *ſhall their unbelief make the faith of*
" *God of none effect, God forbid*, Rom. 3. 3, 4. now the *Faithfulneſs* of
" *God* who *keepeth Covenant and mercy to thouſands*, ſupplies the de-
" fect of the *Faith* of the *next Parents*, and *maketh good his Covenant*
" to the *Children* in reſpect of the *Faith* of their *former Anceſtors* in
" *Elder Ages.*

But againſt this ſome may object a paſſage in Mr. *Cottons Book of the way of the Churches, pag. 81.* where it is ſaid, *where neither of the Parents can claim right to the Lords Supper, their Infants cannot claim right to Baptiſme*, therefore it may ſeem, that Mr. *Cottons Judgement* was not as hath been now declared. Unto this, let the *judicious Reader attentively* hear the Anſwer, which is, (1.) In that very Book of Mr. *Cottons*, there are ſundry paſſages which plead for an *Enlargement* of *Baptiſme*,

Baptiſme, further then to the *Immediate Children* of perſons in *full Communion*, even to the *Children* of ſuch *Parents who have ſuch a faith as denominateth them Chriſtian Believers in oppoſition to Pagan Infidels*, yea, if there be a *Chriſtian Spouſor* for the *Child* of a *Stranger*, or *wicked man*, it may be *baptized*, ſee the way, *pag 87.88.106,115.*

2*dly*. That Book of the way was printed from an *imperfect Copy*, in which reſpect it is not to be wondred at, if there be therein ſome paſſages *contradictory* to Mr. *Cottons known Judgement*. (3.) Mr. *Cotton* himſelf was much troubled when he ſaw that Book come forth, and was deſirous that the Reader ſhould underſtand that his Judgement in ſuch things, wherein the *Book of the way* is *diſcrepant* from that of the *Keyes*, ſhould be ſought for, not in the *Book of the way*, but in that of the *Keys*. And that no one may think that theſe things are *Imaginary*, or *conjecturall* only, let us hear Mr. *Cotton* ſpeaking in his own words in his *printed defence* againſt the *Imputations* of Mr. *Cawdrey* written not long before his death, and Publiſhed by *Doctor Owen*, In which Book *pag. 36. 37, 38, 39*. "The truth is (ſaith Mr. *Cotton*) that ma-
"ny years ago I was ſeriouſly moved by ſome of our *Brethren* and
"*Fellow Elders* here to draw up an *Hiſtorical narration* of our *Church*
"*way*, together with ſome *familiar Grounds* of the ſame briefly. In
"ſhort time as God helped, I diſpatched it, which when our *Brethren*
"had peruſed it; I ſaw they did not cloſe with it, yet a *Brother* going
"for *England*, got ſome where, a Copy of it, and preſented it to ſome
"of the *Congregational way* there, and I afterwards heard, neither did
"they cloſe with it, and in particular not with that paſſage which is
"here recited---- which ſince appeareth more openly, by the *Aſte-*
"*riſk* put upon that paſſage, and upon ſundry other in the Book, but
"before I ſaw that, and had only heard, that they did not fully ac-
"cord, I hoped that it had met with a *timely Suppreſſion*, rather then an
"*Impreſſion*, for I heard no more of it, for two or three years after.
"mean while perceiving that one main point of *diſſatisfaction*, was the
"*Authority* given to the *Fraternity*, I conſidered more *ſeriouſly* and *di-*
"*ſtinctly* of the whole power of the *Keys*, and expreſſed my *apprehen-*
"*ſions* in that treatiſe of the *Keys* which our *Brethren* here did well ac-
"cept, and ſo did the *Brethren* of like Judgement in *England*, and
"ſome of them were pleaſed to atteſt it, with the *Preface* that is now
"*Extant* before it ._____ This was ſundry years after the *Tre-*
"*tiſe* of the *way* had been finiſhed, and carryed to *England*, and as I ho-
"ped ſuppreſſed, but it ſeemeth ſome *Brother* there- cauſed his Copy,
"which was indeed *abrupt* in the *Entrance*, and imperfect, otherwiſe

"to be publiſhed in print, which when I ſaw, it troubled me not a lit-
"tle, as knowing that the *diſcrepant Expreſſions* in the one, and in the
"other, might trouble Friends, and give Advantages to Adverſaries.
"I ſuffered both to ſtand as they did, eſpecially, ſeeing I could not
"help it, the *Book of the way* being publiſhed without my Conſent, and
"both the *way* and the *Keys* paſt my revoking, ſo that if the Replier
"find ſome diſcrepancy in one of theſe Books from the other, Let
"him know that the Doctrine of the *way*, in ſuch few points, wherein
"it differs from the *Keys*, was not mine, when the *Keys* was publi-
"ſhed, much leſs when the *way* was publiſhed, which was many years
"after, though it had been penned many years before.

Thus much may ſuffice for the clearing of Mr. *Cottons Judgement, concerning the Subject of Baptiſme.* In the ſame year, and in the ſame Veſſel, with Mr. *Cotton* came into this Country that famous Mr. *Thomas Hooker* late Paſtor of the Church in *Hartford* upon *Connecticot*. Now that in Mr. *Hookers Judgement*, the Children concerning whom the Queſtion is, have a continued ſtanding, and membership in the viſible Church (upon which hinge the Controverſy about the *Enlargement* of the *Subject of Baptiſme* turns) is evident from a paſſage in his moſt Judicious and *accurate Survey of Church Diſcipline*, in which Book "*pag.* 48. are theſe words, in ſome Caſes (ſaith Mr. "*Hooker*) an Implicit Covenant, may be fully Sufficient, as Suppoſe "a whole Congregation ſhould conſiſt of ſuch, who were Child ren to "the Parents now deceaſed, who were Confederate, their children "were true members, according to the Rules of the Goſpel by pro-"feſſing of their Fathers Covenant, though they ſhould not make any "*perſonal* and *vocal Expreſſion* of their *Engagement*, as the Fathers did. Alſo he lays it down for a *Maxim* that *fœderati ſunt baptizandi* proving by ſeveral Argumeuts that Confederates are the *proper Subject* of *Baptiſme*, ſee in the ſame Book, *part* 3. *pag.* 11. 12. Now if they that are Confederate, and members of the viſible Church, have a right to Baptiſme, and if alſo the Children in Queſtion are *Confederate*, and members of the *viſible Church*, both which are affirmed by Mr. *Hooker*, it muſt needs be that in his Judgement, the *Children* in Queſtion have right to Baptiſme.

At the ſame Time, and in the ſame Veſſel with Mr. *Cotton* and Mr. *Hooker*, there came the godly, learned, Mr. *Samuel Stone*, late Teacher of the Church in *Hartford*, concerning whom, what his Judgement was, touching the now agitated Controverſies, is known from his practice in the laſt years of his Life. And that his Judgement was

ſuitable

suitable to that practice many years before his decease, appears from a Letter of his written to the Reverend Mr. *Mather of Dorchester*, and bearing date *June 6. 1650.* In which Letter he thus expresseth himself. "I *Conceive*, (saith Mr. *Stone*) that Children of *Church members* "have right to *Church membership* by virtue of their *Fathers Co-* "*venant*, it being granted that they are in *Abrahams Covenant*, they "have *Membership by Birth*, Gal.2.15. (2 *dly.*) *God is their God*, "Gen.17.7. (3 *dly.*) *They are Branches*, Rom.11. (4.) they are "*Subjects of Christs visible Kingdome*, Ezek.37.25. Hence,

"1. If they be presented to a Church, and Claim their Interest, "they cannot be denyed, according to the Rules of the Gospel:

"2. Hence there hath been a sinful neglect in *New-England* of such "Children who have either not been presented, or not Received, "when they have claimed their right. I spake with Mr. *Watham*, "and we question not the right of Children, but we Conceive it "would be Comfortable to have some Concurrence, which is that we "have waited for a Long Time. And I think unless there may be "some Conference of Elders this year in the *Bay* about it, that we may "see some Reason to the Contrary, our Churches will Adventure to "practice according to their Judgement, *i. e.* take in all such Chil-"dren as members, much desire that there may be some meeting of the "Elders this year, that these things may be Considered and setled in "the Churches, according to the mind of Christ, *&c.* These things do sufficiently manifest what was the Judgement of Mr. *Cotton*, Mr. *Hooker*, and Mr. *Stone*, who all three (as was Intimated) Came into *New-England* in the same Vessel, *Anno 1633.* And they may justly be reckoned amongst *the first three* of *New-Englands Worthies.*

In the year 1635. God brought into this Country three more of our *Worthies*: Another *Triumvirate* not unlike the former, *viz. Mr. Mather*, *Mr. Norton* and *Mr. Shepard*, whose Judgement touching the Question before us, that it did Concur with the Doctrine of the late Synod, will appear from the Sequel.

As for Mr. *Mather* late Teacher of the Church in *Dorchester*, what the Apprehensions of that *Reverend man* of God were Concerning the *present Controversie* in his Latter Time is well known. The *Ancients* had an opinion that the ἔσχατα ῥήματα *dying words* of worthy men were *Oraculous*, because the Soul near its *transmigration* groweth more Divine. Be that Notion as it is, yet the *dying Counsel* of that blessed man to his Son, is of *weighty Consideration.* And that Mr. *Mather* did not take up his perswasion concerning the *Enlargement* of

Baptiſme, in his laſt years only, but that he was of the ſame Judgement four and twenty years and more, before his deceaſe, is evident from ſome *Manuſcripts* of his left written with his own hand. For that *Reverend Author* did in the year 1645, prepare for the Preſs an *elaborate diſcourſe* which he entituleth, *A plea for the Churches of Chriſt in* New-England, and in the ſecond part of that diſcourſe, which contains *poſitive grounds from Scripture and Reaſon for the Juſtification of the way of the Churches of Chriſt in* New-England, there is this Queſtion propounded.

"Queſt. When thoſe that were baptized in Infancy by the Cove-"nant of their Parents being come to Age, are not yet found fit to be re-"ceived to the Lords Table, although they be married and have Chil-"dren, whether are thoſe their Children to be baptized or no. The "Anſwer is in theſe words, I propound to Conſideration this Reaſon "for the *Affirmative*, *viz.* That the Children of ſuch Parents ought "to be baptized: the Reaſon is, the Parents as they were born in the "Covenant, ſo they ſtill continue therein, being neither caſt out, nor "deſerving ſo to be, and if ſo, why ſhould not their Children be bapti-"zed, for if the Parents be in Covenant, are not the Children ſo like-"wiſe? Is not the Tenour of the Covenant, I *will be a God to thee and* "*to thy Seed*? Is not the Text plain? *Act.* 2. 39. *the promiſe is to you* "*and to your Children.* And if theſe Children be in the Covenant, "why ſhould they not be admitted to the Seal of the Covenant, Sith "they are partakers of that, which is one main ground, why other In-"fants are admitted thereto? doth it not ſeem unreaſonable that theſe "Infants being partakers of the ground of Baptiſme as well as others, "that nevertheleſs others ſhould be admitted and theſe be refuſed? If "other Infants were admitted to Baptiſme upon ſome ground, whereof "theſe were not partakers, then there might be Reaſon to make a diffe-"rence between theſe Infants and others, but if the ground & Reaſon of "admitting others, be Common to theſe as well as to others, it ſeems "then to be Reaſonable, that theſe as well as others ſhould ſhare in the "priviledge. If their Parents were caſt out of the Church by Cenſures, "or fallen away from the ſame by *wilful Apoſtacy* and *Schiſme*, or "deſerving to be Caſt out by reaſon of *Scandal*, then there were more "Reaſon that their Infants ſhould be excluded from the Seal: But ſith "no ſuch thing can be ſaid of the Parents of whom we ſpeak, a good "Reaſon ſhould be given, why their Infants are debarred? for if it be "ſaid the Parents are not *Confirmed members*, nor have yet been "found fit for the Lords Table, I conceive this needs not to hinder

their

"their Infants from *Baptiſme* ſo long as they, I mean the Parents do "neither renounce the Covenant, nor doth the Church ſee juſt Cauſe "to Caſt them out from the ſame; for it is not the Parents fitneſs for the "*Lords Supper*, that is the ground of baptizing their Children, but the "Parents and ſo their Children being in the Covenant, this is that "which is the main ground thereof; and as long as this doth Conti-"nue, not diſſolved by any *Church Cenſure* againſt them, nor by any "*Scandalous Sin* of theirs, ſo long the Children may be baptized.

Theſe words are to be ſeen written with Mr. *Mathers* own hand, *Anno 1645.* Now if ſix and twenty years ago in a Book written *in defence of the Churches in* New England, *and in juſtification of the way of theſe Churches*, it were true Doctrine that perſons might have right to *Baptiſme* for their Children, and yet themſelves not be fit for the *Lords Table*: If ſix and twenty years agoe, this was written in a Book, whoſe whole deſigne was to Juſtifie *the way of theſe Churches*, how then can it be ſaid, that the preſent pleading for ſuch *Enlargement of Baptiſme* is any *Apoſtacy* from *Primitive Principles*? Alſo the ſame thing was *Aſſerted* and *urged* by this *Reverend Author* in his *Model of Church Government* preſented to the *Synod*, *Anno 1647.* And in the years *1648.* and *1649.* he did frequently in his *publick Miniſtry* in *Dorcheſter* thus inſtruct his people as is to be ſeen in the *Sermon Notes* left written *propria manu.* And in the year *1653.* this Queſtion was *fully*, *largly*, and *Elaborately diſcuſſed* by the ſame *Author.* Alſo in a Letter to a Friend, bearing date *30th.* of *Moneth 1651.* He thus expreſſeth himſelf, "for my part my thoughts have "been this long Time, that our Churches in general do fall ſhort in "their practice of that which the Rule requires in this particular, "which I think ought to be thus, *viz.* that the Children of *Church* "*members* ſubmitting themſelves to the *Diſcipline of Chriſt in the* "*Church*, by an act of their own, when they are grown up to mens "and womens Eſtate, ought to be *watched* over as other *members*, and "to have their Infants baptized, but themſelves not to be received to "the *Lords Table*, nor to *voting* in the *Church*, till by the manifeſta-"tion of *Faith* and *Repentance*, they ſhall approve themſelves to be fit "for the ſame. But we have not yet thus practiced, but are now "Conſidering of the matter, and of ſending to other Churches for ad-"vice. Help us I pray you with your prayers that we may have grace "to diſcern, and do the Lords mind and will herein. So that in the year *1651.* it had for a long Time been the Judgement of this *Seer*, that ſome have right to *Baptiſme* for their Children, that yet have not

When this Collection of Teſtimonies was firſt compoſed, it was but 26 years but now it is 29 years ſince that Book was written.

right to the *Lords Supper* for themſelves. But againſt this *Teſtimony* ſome may object a paſſage in Mr. *Mathers* printed Catechiſme, *pag. 91.* This holy man was ſenſible that ſome did take Advantage from an Expreſſion therein, to impute unto him a *change* of *Iudgement*, touching this Queſtion, which had it been ſo indeed, *Ad meliora tranſire nullus pudor*, it is no diſhonour to any man to change for the better, but concerning this Queſtion, that *Reverend man* altered not, but was all along of the ſame Apprehenſion, wherefore knowing in his own heart that he was of the very ſame Judgement, when that *Catechiſme* was written, as in his laſt years he was of, he therefore left a *Manuſcript* in his Study to clear himſelf from ſuch an Imputation, which for his Vindication, we ſhall therefore here Inſert and publiſh. The words are as follow.

"This Queſtion who ought to be baptized being thus Anſwered in a *Ca*
"*techiſme*, viz. men of years when once they are converted to the
"*Faith*, and joyned to the *Church*, and ſuch Infants whoſe Parents, both,
"or one of them are ſo *Converted* and *joyned*: The Queſtion therefore
"now is, whether this Anſwer if ſound and true, do infer that the
"Children of Perſons *Converted* and joyned to the *Church* being
"now *Adult*, and having Children, may not be ſo qualified, as to
"have theſe their Children Baptized afore they who are now the Pa-
"rents, be fit for the *Lords Supper*, or if he that Anſwered the Queſti-
"on in the Catechiſme as above, do think they may, doth not this in-
"fer a change in that mans Apprehenſion, from what it formerly was?

"*Anſwer.* It ſeems not at all to infer any ſuch change

"1. *Becauſe theſe Apprehenſions are no way contrary to one another,*
"*nor at all Inconſiſtent*: For if a man ſay, that the Children laſt men-
"tioned may be baptized, this does not at all infer, that men of years
"converted to the *Faith*, and Joyned to the *Church*, may not be bap-
"tized, nor that ſuch Infants may not be baptized, whoſe Parents,
"one, or both, are ſo Converted and joyned, Nor if a man Anſwer that
"ſuch as the Catechiſme ſpeaks of may be baptized, does this infer,
"that thoſe others may not, there is no Colour ſure, no juſt ground
"for ſuch Conſequence, no more then if one ſhould ſay, that ſuch as
"are become Believers by hearing the Word preached are to be bap-
"tized, (which is a very Truth, *Act. 2. 41* and *8. 12, 37.* and *18 8.*) it
"could thence be proved, that no Infants are to be baptized, as not be-
"ing become Believers, at leaſt not by that means of hearing, preaching,
"this would in no ſort follow from the other, as if one ſhould ſay, that
"ſuch as do the will of God upon Earth ſhall enter into Heaven, & that

ſuch

"ſuch as *feed Chriſt when hungry, cloath him being naked*, ſhall be ſaved "in Heaven, which are very true, *Matth. 7. 21.* and *25. 34*, &c. "doth this prove that *Little Infants*, and the *Thief* upon the *Croſs* "muſt not be ſaved, becauſe the one through *Imbecillity* of Age, and "the other through want of opportunity, did not perform the things "mentioned, it doth not prove it at all, but that Salvation in Heaven "may be the Portion of theſe as well as of the others; even ſo though "ſuch as the Catechiſme ſpeaks of, are to be baptized, it doth not "thence follow, but that the Ordinance may be diſpenſed, to the In- "fants of ſuch members Children as are mentioned, and though it be "diſpenſed to ſuch, this is no denyal but that ſuch as the late Cate- "chiſme ſpeaks of, may be baptized, ſo that here is no Contradiction "between the things Alledged, but that both may be true and con- "ſiſt together.

"2 *dly.* If the words in the Catechiſme had any *Excluſive parti-* "*cle* in them, there had been ſome more ground or Colour for the "Inference; as if the words had been thus, *only* theſe, or *none* but "theſe are to be baptized? but any ſuch *Excluſive* or *Negative par-* "*ticle* there is none, and therefore the Collection or Inference from "them which is made, is groundleſs.

"3 *dly.* The Author of the aforeſaid Catechiſme which was printed "in the year *1650.* had ſundry Times before in the years *1646. 1648.* "*1649.* publickly delivered his Judgement, both by word of mouth, "and by writing that ſuch Children of Church members might have "their Infants baptized, though themſelves were not yet received to "the *Lords Supper*, and ſo divers Times again in the years follow- "ing. And therefore it is not probable, that what is expreſſed in the "ſaid *Catechiſme* ſhould be intended by him to have ſuch a meaning "as is quite Contrary to what himſelf had publickly Delivered both "before, and after, and that at ſundry Times, and in ſeveral wayes.

"4 *dly. Other Authors of much worth for holineſs and Learning, who* "*never meant to deny Baptiſme to ſuch Children of Church members as are* "*ſpoken of*, yet in Anſwer to that Queſtion, who ought to be baptized? "or to whom is Baptiſme to be adminiſtred, have expreſſed themſelves "in Terms, not far unlike to thoſe in the aforeſaid Catechiſme, Mr. *Bulls* "words are theſe, who ought to be baptized? Anſw. *Infidels Conver-* "*ted to the Faith, and the Infants of one, or both Chriſtian Parents. Ca-* "*techiſme. And the Aſſembly of Divines at* Weſtminſter, ſpeak thus.

"Queſt. *Unto whom is Baptiſme to be adminiſtred?*

"*Anſw.* Baptiſme is not to be adminiſtred to any that are out of "the *Viſible Church*, and ſo *ſtrangers from the Covenant of Promiſe*,

" till they profeſs their *Faith in Chriſt*, and *obedience to him*, But In-
" fants deſcending from parents, either both, or but one of them pro-
" feſſing *Faith in Chriſt*, and *obedience to him*, are in that reſpect with-
" in the *Covenant*, and to be *baptized*- *Larger Catechiſme*. Theſe
" words we ſee are not farre unlike to thoſe in the Catechiſme before
" mentioned, and yet it were a *Collection* farr from their meaning, to
" gather from theſe words, that none ſhould have *Baptiſme* for their
" Children, except themſelves were fit for the *Lords Supper*: Sure ſuch
" an Apprenention was never taught nor intended by them; why then
" ſhould it be thought to be Contained in the words of the aforeſaid
" *Catechiſme*, or deducted from them,, when as the words there, and
" in theſe *Reverend Authors* are ſo very like, even ſo very like, that
" the *Collection* or *deduction* mentioned is either ſound and juſt from
" both, or from neither.

" 5 *ly*. If the Parents ſpoken of may notwithſtanding their *unfitneſs*
" for that *Ordinance* of the *Lords Supper*, yet be truly ſaid to be *Con-*
" *verted to the Faith*, and *joyned to the Church*, then the appearance of
" Contradiction is at an end. Now for the one of theſe *Qualifications*,
" viz. That they be *Converted to the Faith*, if *Faith* be taken as it of-
" ten is for the *Doctrine of Faith*, as *Act. 6. 7. Iud.* 3. then it is evi-
" dent that the Parents ſpoken of, are not deſtitute of this *Faith*, be-
" cauſe it is required of them, that they underſtand the *Doctrine of*
" *Faith*, and publickly profeſs their Aſsent thereto; And if *Faith* be
" taken for the *grace of Faith* in the heart, why may they not be ſaid
" to have *Faith* in this Senſe alſo, ſeeing it is required of them, that
" beſides their underſtanding the *Doctrine of Faith*, and their pro-
" feſſing their Aſsent thereto, that they muſt alſo not be *Scandalous*
" *in Life*, but *ſolemnly* own the *Covenant*, and therein give up them-
" ſelves and their Children to the Lord. And does not this imply
" ſome *beginning of Faith*? Can perſons have all theſe *Qualifications*,
" and yet for all this be *utterly deſtitute of the grace of Faith*? It ſeems
" not ſuitable to *Charity* to judge ſo. And in as much as men have
" neither *Faith*, nor any thing that good is by Nature, therefore they
" that have it may be ſaid to be *converted to it*, and ſo the *Parents*, the
" *baptizing* of whoſe Children is in Queſtion, are not without the one
" of the *Qualifications* mentioned in the Catechiſme, *viz.* of being
" *Converted to the Faith*. And for the other, *viz.* of being joyned to
" the Church, this cannot be denyed touching theſe Parents, for as
" much, as by means of the Covenant, which takes in Parents and
" Children, they have been either born in the Church, or taken in, in

their

"their Infancy, and ſo they were joyned to the Church, If ſo, they "continue ſtill, being neither Caſt out, nor deſerving ſo to be, and "therefore their Infants are the Children of Parents joyned to the "Church. And leſt it ſhould be ſaid, that though they were in the "Church in their Infancy and *minority*, yet now being *Adult*, they "fall out, or go out by their own *default*, in neglecting the duty per-"taining to the *Adult*, therefore for the preventing of this, it is here "ſaid, that they ſolemnly owned the Covenant before the Church, "and therein give up themſelves and their Children to the Lord, *&c.* "So that here is a perſonal and publick act of their own, in reſpect of "the Covenant, and giving up themſelves and their Children to the "Lord, by their own act, with a Subjection of themſelves to the *Go-*"*vernment of Chriſt* in his Church, whereby it appears that as theſe "Parents were in the Church in their *minority*, and were never ſince "Caſt out, ſo neither are they fallen out by their own neglect; But "do manifeſt their Continuance in the Church, and in the Covenant "by their own perſonal act. And ſo the other *Qualification* of Pa-"rents, whoſe Children are to be *baptized*, which the Catechiſme "mentioned, is found in the Parents ſpoken of, *viz.* that they are "perſons joyned to the Church, and therefore he that affirms that "theſe may have their Children *baptized*, does not Contradict "the fore-mentioned Catechiſme at all, nor is there any thing in the "Catechiſme againſt the baptizing of theſe Children.

This which ha's been expreſſed, may be ſufficient for the vindication of that *Reverend* and *Honoured perſon*.

We proceed therefore to Mr. *Nortons Iudgement* concerning the preſent Controverſy, and that the Apprehenſions of that *Iudicious* and *Eagle eyed Seer* did Concur with thoſe Servants of the Lord, which have been mentioned, is apparent, both from what himſelf did often publickly teach, not only in *Boſton*, but in *Ipſwich*; and from a Script compoſed *Anno 1654.* by that learned hand, which becauſe it is *acute*, *clear*, and *diſtinct*, (according to the wonted manner of that *great Author*) and becauſe it was never yet publiſhed, we ſhall therefore here Inſert it: It is that which follows.

Queſt. *Whether the Children of Parents in Church Covenant are Church members and ought to be baptized.*

"*Anſw.* Children of Parents in Church Covenant are Church "members, and ought to be baptized. This Anſwer ſtands upon the "proof of theſe five propoſitions.

1. *Children are capable of Confederating in a publick perſon.*

2. Children

2. *Children by divine Inſtitution have Confederated, and do ſtill Confederate in their Parents as publick perſons.*

3. *By virtue of this Confederation Children are made Church members.*

4. *The membership of Children Confederating in their Parents is a diſtinct membership from the membership of their Parents*

5. *This diſtinct membership gives them a proper right unto Baptiſme, ſo as they are baptized by their own right, and not by the right of their Parents.*

Propoſition. I.

1. "*Children are capable of Confederating in a publick perſon.*

"A publick perſon is when ſome one of a Society doth by the "Law in ſuch an Act ſtand for the whole Society. So he that is but one "perſon *Phyſically*, is *Politically* as many perſons as the Law makes "him, Since Religion and Reaſon both allow and require *humane* "*Laws* to create ſuch publick perſons for the good of the Community, "much more may we ſee Cauſe, why they may be conſtituted, by "the divine Law of him, whoſe *Sole Prerogative* it is, that he may "do whatſoever he pleaſeth.

2. "That *Children* though they are *uncapable of Confederating in* "*their proper Perſons*, yet are *Capable of Confederating in a publick* "*perſon*, appeareth.

Bradward. de Cauſa Dei l. 1 Cerol. 32 Polan. Synt. l. 6. c. 3.

1. "From the nature of God, whoſe will is the Rule of Rules, and "Reaſon of all Reaſons, *nonne cuilibet Chriſtiano imo & prophano, pro* "*demonſtratione ſufficere debet.*

"*Nam quod illius (ſc. Adami) voluntas fuit noſtra & nos in illo vo-* "*luimus, verum eſt, ſed ratio hujus veritatis, nulla eſt praeter quam vo-* "*luntas Creatoris; nunquam aliter intelliges, juſtum fuiſſe nos omnes* "*naſci miſeros propter unius hominis peccatum.*

2. "*From the Lordſhip of God, who may impoſe upon the reaſonable* "*Creature whatſoever duty he pleaſeth.*

3. "*From the nature of a Creature, which oweth unto God what duty* "*he will call for.*

4. "*From the nature of Community, where the abſent, yea, thoſe that* "*are unborn, are obliged by the deed of their Plenipotentiary acting Le-* "*gally*, 2 Sam. 21 1. Joſhua 9. 7, 15, 18. *Joſhuahs Covenant with the* "*Gibeonites bound Saul.*

Propoſition II.

"*Children by divine Inſtitution have Confederated, and do ſtill Con-*
"*federate in their Parents as publick Perſons.* 1. Mankind conſidered
"in *Adam*, Gen. 2. 17. *Rom.* 5. 12. 1 *Cor.* 15. 22.

2. "*Abrahams Children born in his houſe, and alſo his Seed in their*
"*Generations, Confederated in Abraham*, Gen. 17. 7, 25. 27.

3. "*The Poſterity of Iſrael entered into Covenant in the Act of their*
"*Progenitors, in* Horeb *ſoon after their coming out of* Egypt, *Ezek.* 16
"60. the adient and Children yet unborn renewed Covenant in the
"Act of *Iſrael in the plains of* Moab, *Deut.* 29.

4. "*Children under the Goſpel Confederate in their Parents*, becauſe
"to the Children of Parents in Covenant, that promiſe *Gen.* 17. 7.
"doth belong, *Act.* 2. 39. becauſe they are holy, 1 *Cor.* 7. 14.
"which Holineſs cannot be underſtood to be any but external Holi-
"neſs, nor can that external be reaſonably interpreted of any but
"Church holineſs in caſe to the like phraſe, *Rom.* 11. 16. —— Be-
"cauſe Children are baptized, which Baptiſme is the Goſpel Circum-
"ciſion, *Col.* 2. 11, 12. therefore in Church Covenant, but Covenant
"they do not in their proper perſons, therefore in their publick per-
"ſons, *viz.* their Parents.

5. "*Either Children under the Goſpel are Confederate in their Pa-*
"*rents, or Children may not be baptized or non-members may be baptized,*
"*but neither are to be baptized, and non-members are not to be baptized.*
"Therefore Children under the Goſpel are Confederate in their Pa-
"rents. That Children are to be baptized is with us granted, that
"*non members* are not to be baptized appeareth thus. External Bap-
"tiſme is an external Seal of the external, not only of the internal Co-
"venant. Baptiſme as touching the ſubſtantial part thereof, ſucceeds
"Circumciſion in place and uſe. As therefore Circumciſion was ap-
"plied only to ſuch as were in Covenant, ſo ſhould it be with Bap-
"tiſme.

2 *dly.* "they who are not Subject to the Church Government, have
"no right to Church privileges, of which Baptiſme is a principal one.
"but *non members* are not Subject to Church Government, There-
"fore &c

3 *dly.* "They with whom the Church have nothing to do, have no
"right to that thing which can only be done in a Church as ſuch. But
"with *non-members* the Church have nothing to do, 1 *Cor.* 5. 12.
"Therefore &c.

4 ly. "If to baptize in ordinary dispensation is only a Shepardly office "act, then to be baptized is the privileage only of the Flock But to "baptize is in ordinary dispensation only a Shepardly Office act, "Matth 28. 19. The Reason of the Consequence is, Shepard and "Flock ate Relatives, and *Relatorum mutuus est ambitus.* The walk "of Relates is of equal extent.

5 ly. "If *Infant non-members have right to Baptisme, then Adult* "*non-members*; if so, then why may not non-members come to the "Lords Supper.

Proposition III.

"By virtue of this Confederation Children are made Church-mem-"bers.

1. "*That in Children which giveth that form of membership maketh* "*Children Church members*, But Confederation giveth the Form of "Church membership. Therefore Confederation maketh Children "Church members.

2 dly. "*That whereupon God declareth Children to be in Covenant* "*with him to be holy, and to have right unto Church Priviledges, makes* "*Children to be Church members.* But upon Confederation God de-"clareth Children to be in Covenant with him to be holy, and to have "right to Church Priviledges, *Gen. 17. 1 Cor. 7. 14. Acts 2. 39.* "therefore Confederation makes Children to be Church members.

3 dly. "*That which distinguishes between Children in Church Estate* "*and Children not in Church Estate, makes Children Church members.* "But Confederation distinguishes between Children in Church Estate "and Children not in Church Estate, therefore Confederation, *&c.*

4 ly. "*Either Children are members by Confederation, or there may* "*be given some other way of their membership, or all Children are non-*"*members.* But neither can there be given any other way of their "membership, neither is it a true Proposition, that all Children are "non-members; therefore, *&c.*

Proposition IV.

"This distinct membership gives them a proper right unto Bap-"tisme, so as they are not baptized by the right of their Parents, but "by their own right. (1.) Such as their membership is, such is their right "unto Baptisme, But their membership as hath been already proved

in

" is diſtinct, therefore their right to Baptiſme is diſtinct. (2 *dly.*) That " Covenant which Contracteth upon the delinquent, a proper guilt " in order unto puniſhment conferreth upon the obedient a proper " right, and in order unto Priviledges. But the Covenant of Infants " Contracteth upon them Delinquent a proper guilt in order unto pu- " niſhment, *Ezek 16.59.* therefore it Conferreth upon the obedient " a proper right in order unto Priviledges. (3 *dly.*) If the Children " of the Jews in Covenant had a proper right to Circumciſion, then " their Children of Believers in Covenant, have a proper right to Bap- " tiſme. But the Children of the Jews in Covenant had a proper right " to Circumciſion: In caſe of the Parents Ceremonial uncleanneſs, " the Parents notwithſtanding their membership were ſuſpended " from Communion in the holy things, yet was the Child even then not- " withſtanding the Parents Suſpenſion to be Circumciſed the eighth day.

4. *dly.* " *If Confederate Children are to be baptized notwithſtanding* " *the Parents be not members, then they are to be baptized, not by their* " *Parents but by their own membership.* But Confederate Children " are to be baptized, notwithſtanding their Parents be not members, " as in Caſe of the Parents death or Cenſure falling out after their " Childrens being, and before the Time of their Baptiſme, therefore " Children are baptized by their own membership; Though the mem- " berſhip of the Parent is by Divine Inſtitution inſtrumental to the " membership of the Child, (for God inſtitutes ſuch only to be pub- " lick perſons) yet the membership of the Child remains, though the " membership of the Parent ceaſeth, *Pauls* freedom by birth lives af- " ter his Fathers death, *Acts 22.28.* the effect continues, though the " Inſtrument be extinct.

1. Object. " In caſe the Parents themſelves be not admitted to " full Communion, or that they lye under offence, it ſeems then their " Children ought not to be baptized.

Anſw. " We muſt carefully diſtinguiſh between the Parents ſtand- " ing as a publick perſon, and between the Parents ſtanding as a ſingle " perſon, the Child is contained in the Parent only when he ſtands as " a publick perſon, not when he ſtands as a ſingle perſon. Hence only " the Confederation, not the condition or converſation of the Parent is " imputed to the Child. As *Adam* was a publick perſon, in the firſt " tranſgreſſion, therefore the firſt tranſgreſſion was imputed to his po- " ſterity, not only to him, *Rom. 5 12.* but in his after tranſgreſſions " he was in this reſpect but a ſingle, not a publick perſon, therefore

they are imputed only unto him, and not to his Posterity

2 *Object.* "Members are compleat or incompleat: Children are "members incompleat, not compleat.

Answer 1. "Did this distinction hold, yet that the incompleat- "nes of Childrens membership is not such why they should be hindred "from being baptized, is clear from *Ped-Baptisme*.

2 *dly.* "Members are to be considered either in respect of their "Communion, or in respect of their membership. In respect of their "Communion they may be said to be compleat or incompleat; be- "cause Communion receives more or less, and may be enjoyed either "in whole or in part, But if members be considered, in respect of "membership which is the present Query, then they cannot be said "to be compleat, or incompleat, because membership being a Rela- "tion doth not receive more or less, as a little member is as truly a "member as the greatest, the hand of a Child is truly a hand, and "member of the whole as the hand of a man.

"*Object.* 3. Membership is { Immediate, *viz.* when these that are Adult Confederate in their own persons. Mediate, *viz.* when Infants Confederate in a publick person as Mankind Confederated in Adam.

1 *Answer.* "Though *Adam* Confederated in his own person. *i. e.* "although it be the person of *Adam* that Confederated, yet *Adam* "himself Confederated not as a single person, but as a publick per- "son, so as though *Adam* and the Parents of Children *Confederate* Imme- "diately, *i. e.* in their own persons, yet do they not confederate as "single persons. In this notion, *Scil.* of not confederating as single "persons, the Condition of both mediate, and Immediate members "are alike.

2 *dly.* "The validity of membership depends not upon the *In-* "strument or medium, to wit, the Parents standing as a publick per- "son in the Act of Confederation, but upon the Institution of God in "Christ, the value and virtue of the effect here cannot depend upon "the medium (which is it self also an Arbitrary Effect) but upon the "supream and Independent Cause, The membership of a male Child "Confederating mediately, *i. e.* in the publick person of the Mother, "excelleth the membership of the Mother Confederating immediate- "ly in her own person, because the Mother though she be a Church "member, yet is not capible of being a member constituent of the "Church (for many Brethren constitute a Church, in that they alone

be

"be capable of being the Subject of the power of the Keyes, *1 Cor.* "*14.34. 1 Tim.2.12.*) so as should the Brethren dye, the Sisters "surviving could not continue a Church, but would immediately cease "to be Church members, yet her male Child is *not only a Church mem-* "*ber*, but is also capable of being *a member Constituent of the Church.*

3 *dly.* "The Cause why a member is not admitted to such and such "Communion, is not any defect in membership, but some defect con- "cerning the qualification of the member. The mother notwithstand- "ing her membership is inferiour to the membership of her male "Child, (she being as was said before *a member* of the Church, but not "a *member Constituent* of a Church) is admitted to the Supper, yet "the Child is not. A man or woman Adult Confederating in their "own persons, Immediately upon some offence possibly falling out or "discovered between their Admission and intended Baptisme, may "not be baptized, where as a Child Confederated in his publick per- "son is to be baptized.

Object. 4. "Children in their non-Age are by their Parents only "materially, and not by themselves formally and actually members.

Answ. "Members potentially are such only in possibility, but as "yet non-members actually. *Membership* is had two wayes, either by "Confederating in a publick person, or by Confederating in our own "persons, Children are actually and formally members by Confedera- "tion in their publick person, not in their own persons: they who "have the matter and Form of membership, are actually members, "Children Confederate in their Parents have the matter and Form of "membership, *viz.* Holiness, *Mal.2.15. Rom.11 16. 1 Cor.7.14.* "And Confederation in their Parents as their publick person, *Gen 17.* "*Acts 2.39.* therefore Infants Confederate in their Parents were "actually and formally, not potentially Circumcised under the Law "they are actually & formally, not potentially baptized under the Gos- "pel, therefore they are actually and formally, and not only potentially "members. If Mankind Confederated actually in *Adam* their pub- "lick person, when they did not so much as exist in their proper per- "sons, then may children actually existing in their proper persons, "actually *Confederate* in their publick person. But Mankind not "yet existing in their proper persons, *Confederated* in *Adam* their "publick person. *Peccatum Adami non fuit alienum sed etiam no-* "*strum peccatum Adami fuit voluntarium suo modo respectu nostri quia* "*ut fuimus in Adamo nostro Parentes, ita voluimus in illo, seu volun-* "*tas illa Adami fuit voluntas totius Massæ.* That Speech of *Thomas* *Vedelius de Deo & creat. qu. 105.*

 though

"though uſed by him to another purpoſe may aptly be applyed here,
"*peccatum Adami fuit gravius noſtris ſecundum circumſtantiam perſonæ non autem ſecundum ſpeciem.*" *Som. 22. n. 163. 3.*

"If children ſo ſoon as they exiſt are actually guilty of a *Covenant*
"*broken*, then children as ſoon as they exiſt are capable of *actually*
"*Confederating*, breaking of a *Covenant* ſuppoſes the being of a *Cove-*
"*nant* that cannot be broken, that never had a being. *Ab iſt Tertii*
"*adjecti ad eſt ſecundi adjecti valet Conſequentia.* But children ſo ſoon
"as they exiſt are guilty of a *Covenant broken*, witneſs Original Sin
"actually inflicted upon children as the puniſhment of their Sin in *Ad-*
"*am*. God doth not puniſh actually ſuch as are only Sinners potenti-
"ally, but as yet have not actually ſinned. Neither doth childrens
"incapacity, to exert *Church acts* deny them to be actually Church
"members, for then Brethren under offence before any Cenſure, bre-
"thren infirmed, by ſome ſinleſs Accident, yea, brethren when aſleep
"ſhould all of them be *potentially* only, and not actually *Church mem-*
"*bers*. Nor doth *Childrens incapacity* to Vote or Conſtitute a Church, de-
"ny them to be actually Church members, for thence it would follow,
"that the Sifters were only *potentially*, and not actually *Church members*

More needs not to be ſaid of Mr. *Nortons Judgement* concerning this Subject, we come to Mr. *Shepards*, ſometime Paſtor of the Church in *Cambridg* in *New-England*, who beſides his eminent abilities, was a man of much real and living Communion with God, and therefore more like to know the mind of Chriſt, then many others Now in a Letter of his (Dated *June 1649.* which was not three monethe before his decreaſe) "he does aſſert and prove, that Children are members of the *viſible*
"*Church*, and that their membership continues when *Adult*, and that
"the Children of Believers are to be accounted of the Church until
"they poſitively reject the Goſpel, and that the membership of Chil-
"dren hath no tendency in it, to pollute the Church any more now,
"then under the *Old Teſtament*, and that children are under Church
"diſcipline, and that ſome perſons *Adult* may be admitted to Bap-
"tiſme, and yet not to the *Lords Supper*, &c. The whole Letter being already publiſhed, we ſhall not here inſert it, or any thing further concerning it, only aſſure the Reader that the Letter it ſelf (even the αὐτόγραφον) is ſtill to be ſeen, as it was written by Mr. *Shepards* own hand. Alſo the ſame Author in his printed defence of the *nine poſitions*, *pag.* 143. does maintain the *Church membership* of children and their Subjection to Diſcipline. *In* the year after theſe mentioned, *viz. Anno 1636.* here arrived two other of *New-Englands Worthies.*

Namely,

Namely, Mr. *Ralph Partrich*, and Mr. *Nathaniel Rogers*. As for Mr. *Partrich* ſometimes faithful Paſtor of the Church in *Duxbery* in *Plimouth Colony*, what his Judgement was touching the preſent controverſy, is to be ſeen from that *Model of Church Diſcipline*, which was by him compoſed and preſented to the Synod at *Cambridg*, *Anno 1648.* and which is ſtill extant under the hand writing of the *Reverend Author*, in which Manuſcript are theſe words. "The perſons unto whom the Sacrament of Baptiſme is diſpenſed (and as we conceive ought to be) "are ſuch as being of years, and converted from their Sins to the Faith "of Jeſus Chriſt, do joyn in Communion and Fellowſhip with a parti-"cular viſible Church, as alſo the children of ſuch Parents or Parent, as "having laid hold of the Covenant of grace (in the judgement of Cha-"rity) are in a *viſible Covenant*, with his Church and all their Seed af-"ter them that caſt not off the *Covenant* of God by ſome Scandalous "and obſtinate going on in Sin, as may appear by *Math.28.19.* and "*1 Cor.7.14.* with *Gen.17*, &c. compared.

Thus for Mr. *Partrich* his Judgement. Concerning Mr. *Nathaniel Rogers* late eminent Paſtor of the Church of *Ipſwich* in *New-England*, that his Judgement did concur with the Doctrine of the late Synod touching Baptiſme; is certain from what himſelf did publickly teach ſome years before his Deceaſe. Alſo from a Letter of his written to the *Reverend* Mr. *Richard Mather* ſome years before *Mr. Rogers* went to his Reſt, which Letter ſtill remains under the Authors own hand writing, we ſhall therefore inſert, the ſubſtance of it, which followeth.

Reverend and dear Sir,

"I Received a Letter with a Book from you, and do return you this "Teſtimony of my moſt thankful acceptance of your kindneſs and good "will both in your Letter and worthy Treatiſe of Juſtification, which "(as yours are wont to be) is nervous, and this is compendious in a ſpe-"cial manner, and yet perſpicuous. I ſee my defect in *Hen. Den's* mat-"ters ſupplyed by your Diligence. To the Queſtion concerning the "Children of Chuch members, I have nothing to oppoſe, and I won-"der any ſhould deny them to be members. - They are members *in* "*Cenſu Eccleſiaſtico*. God ſo calls them, the Church is ſo to account "them, and when they are *Adultæ ætatis*, though having done no perſo-"nal act, yet are to be judged members ſtill, until after due Calling "upon, they ſhall refuſe or neglect to acknowledge and own the Co-"venant of their Parents, and profeſs their belief of, and Subjection to

the

"the Contents thereof, which if they ſhall deny, the Church may Ca-
"ſhier or diſown them, —— Now for practice I confeſs I account it a
"great default, that we have made no more real diſtinction, between
"theſe and others, that they have been no more attended as the *Lambs*
"of the *flock of Chriſt*, and whether it be not the cauſe of the corrup-
"tion and woful defection of our youth, *diſquiri permittimus* We are
"this week to meet in the Church about it, and I know nothing but we
"muſt ſpeedily fall to practice. If we in this ſhall be Leaders, I pray
"beg wiſdom from *the Father of Lights*, and him who is our *Wiſdom* as
"well as our *Righteouſneſs*, I commit you to the *bleſſed Communion* of
"the Spirit of the *Lord Jeſus*, and reſt,

XI. 18. 1652. Yours in him Cordially
N. Rogers

These Teſtimonies are more then abundantly ſufficient to evince that *the firſt Fathers* of this Country were for that *Enlargement of Baptiſme*, which the late Synod Book pleads for, And that therefore *ſuch a practice is no Apoſtacy from our Primitive Principles*: yet further Teſtimonies might be ſuperadded unto theſe, for Mr. *Henry Smith* ſometimes Miniſter of the Word at *Wethersfield* on *Connecticot*; In a Letter of his dated *Auguſt 23. Anno 1647.* (which Letter was alſo written to Mr. *Mather*) thus expreſſes himſelf, "we are at a Loſs in our parts
"about members Children, being received into Communion, becauſe
"it is undetermined, in the extent of it, at the *Synod*, our thoughts here
"are that the promiſe made to the Seed of Confederates, *Gen. 17.*
"takes in all Children of Confederating Parents, whether baptized
"here, or elſe where, whether younger or Elder, if they do either ex-
"preſsly or otherwayes may be Conceived in the Judgement of Cha-
"rity to Conſent thereunto. Now becauſe many have Children grown
"up, which were born in *England*, who would gladly expreſs their
"Conſent, and deſire to their Parents Covenant, only we are loth to walk
"alone, in the thing; we could heartily wiſh we had the Concurrence
"of your Judgement, *&c.* Thus Mr. *Smith*

Likewiſe, Mr. *Prudden* late faithful Paſtor of the Church in *Milford* in *New-Haven Colony* in *New-England* in a Letter to the ſame *Reverend perſon*, which the laſt mentioned was ſent unto, does not only expreſs his own thoughts, but gives Reaſon for his belief, concerning the Queſtion under Agitation, with whoſe *Teſtimony* we ſhall conclude, And becauſe his Letter is of Weighty and worthy Conſideration,

Conſideration, albeit part of it (as of that of Mr. *Rogers*) is already publiſhed in the Preface to the *Synod Book*, yet) we ſhall here inſert, the ſubſtance of it, which now follows,

"*Dear Brother:*

"I was glad at the receipt of your Letters, but I am ſorry to hear of "ſuch breaches in Churches, and no way nor means found out and ap- "plyed for healing, which I fear with you does ſtrengthen the *Preſ-* "*byterian Objection* againſt our *Congregational way*, when the writings "of ſome for our defence, and our practice agree not in that particular. "I think with you that man to be much bleſſed, whom God ſhould "make helpful in thoſe things; though as he ha's but little encourage- "ment to attempt it, ſo can he expect leſs thanks from man who poſ- "ſibly may have erred, but loth to be judged ſo to have done.—Touch- "ing your own Exerciſes you are not alone in them, the power of the El- "ders in preparing matters of offence and other things for the Church, "has been much queſtioned by ſome, But me-thinks that which Mr *Hook-* "*er* ha's written in the Caſe (Survey *pt. 3d. pag. 33.*) ſhou'd ſatisfy "thoſe who are not of a *Contentious Spirit*, I had Conference with him "about this matter, in his life time. And the Summe of what he hath "now written, he then expreſſed and told me withal, that if a Caſe "ſhould be preſented to the Church, in any other way by the Brethren "he would refuſe to act in it, unleſs the Church would firſt diſpute the "point which he would offer, but act againſt his Judgement he would "not, It's true that the Rule requires to tell the Church in due order by "the Officers, as he that Commands one to goe into his houſe, intends "that he ſhould go in by the door.

"The *Elders* are *Captains*, and *Leaders*, and *Rulers*, Heb. 13. 17. "*1 Tim. 5. 18.* And therefore the Brethren muſt not go before them, "A common Souldier muſt not begin or make an Attempt without the "*Captain.*" And the *Elders* being *Leaders* and *Rulers*, they are to or- "der all the publick occaſions, and affairs of the Church, in a comely "manner which they cannot do, if the Brethren have Liberty at their "pleaſure to publiſh what ſeems beſt to themſelves. Touching the de- "ſire of ſuch members Children as deſire to have their Children baptiſ- "zed, it is a thing that I do not yet hear practiced, but for my own "part I am inclined to think, that it cannot juſtly be denyed, becauſe "their next Parents (however not admitted to the *Lords Supper*) ſtand "as Compleat members of the Church, within the Church Covenant.

"and ſo acknowledged that they might have right to Baptiſme. Now "they being in *Covenant* and ſtanding members, their Children alſo are "members by virtue of their Parents *Covenant* and *Membership*, as well "as they themſelves were by virtue of their *Covenant* and *membership*, "and they have not renounced that *Covenant*, nor are juſtly Cenſured "for the breach of that Covenant, but do own and profeſs it, and "by virtue of it claim the Priviledge of it to their Children. Theſe "Children who are within the *Covenant*, and ſo members of it Bap-"tiſme cannot be denyed unto. But the Children in Queſtion are "within the *Covenant* of the Church, and ſo *members* of it, *Ergo*, Bap-"tiſme cannot be denyed to them. The aſſumption is proved thus, "the Children of ſuch Parents, as are within the *Covenant* of the "Church, are themſelves within the *Covenant* of that Church, and ſo "members. But the Children in Queſtion are the Children of ſuch "Parents, as are in *Covenant*, and ſo *members* of the Church, *Ergo*, they "are ſo themſelves. The Propoſition is clear, becauſe the Parents "*Covenant* for themſelves and for their Children, *Deut.29.* from "*10*, to *16. Ezek.16. 8,13.* And God accepts both, *Gen.17.12,13.* "the whole Nation is *federally* holy, they are expreſsly ſaid to be in "*Covenant with their Father*, Deut. *29.* not *partly*, or *partially* in *Cove-*"*nant*, Rom *9.3.4 Act. 2.39.* and God ſtiles himſelf *their God*, as "well as *their Father*, Gen.*17.7,8,9.* and to have God to be our God "is to be in *Compleat Church Covenant* with him. The *aſſumption* is "evident, becauſe elſe ſuch their Parents had not had right to Baptiſme, "the Seal of the *Covenant*: but that they had right unto, and ſo recei-"ved it, and the ſame right they had, the Children have, who are in-"cluded in their *Covenant*, as they were in their Fathers, If it be ſaid "that their Fathers did expreſsly *engage* and *Covenant*, but theſe not. "I Anſwer, that the *Covenant* is the ſame, and of the ſame force to bind, "and of the ſame *extent*, in the one as well as the other: *Explicite* and "*Implicite*, are but *adjuncts* of the *Covenant*, and therefore though they "are not come into *Covenant*, the ſame way that their Parents did, *viz.* "by *explicite perſonal Covenanting*, but are taken in by the *Father Co-*"*venanting* for them and themſelves, yet it ſeems to me, that they are "not leſs truly, or leſs *Compleatly* in *Covenant*. *The God of Peace and* "*Truth guide us* in thoſe wayes. I reſt

"*Milford* June 12. *1651.* Your loving Brother,
Peter Prudden.

Unto theſe might have been added the *Teſtimony* of that *Reverend* and *faithful Servant* of Chriſt Mr. *John Wilſon*, the firſt Paſtor of the

firſt

firſt Church in *Boſton*. But his Judgement touching the queſtion in hand is known to all that knew him. And the Reader is referred to his *dying Speeches*, concerning this matter which are inſerted in the Book called *New Englands memorial*. (*pag. 183. 184.*) which becauſe they were amongſt *the laſt words* of ſo holy a man, cannot without great ſin be *deſpiſed* or *diſregarded*. Alſo we might have mentioned the Judgement of *Reverend* Mr. *Norris*; which that it did Concur with what hath been expreſſed, is to be ſeen from the *Records* of the Church in *Salem*, viz. in their *Records* of the 24*th*. of the *firſt Moneth*: And of the 9*th* of the *fifth Moneth* and *ſixth Moneth*, *Anno 1654*. Likewiſe we might have produced the Judgement of Mr. *Philips* ſometimes the *faithful Paſtor* of the Church in *Watertown*, but the Reader is for that referred to the Preface in the *Synod Book*.

Alſo that ſome *godly* and *judicious* of the *Congregational way* in *England*, are for a *greater Latitude* in the point of Baptiſme, then our *diſſenting Antiſynodalian Brethren* do acknowledge, is manifeſt from what *ſundry Learned men* of that *way* have long ſince publiſhed. For Doctor *Owen* in his review of *Scriſm*, *pag* 134 thus expreſſes himſelf, "I am ſo far from confining Baptiſme *ſubjectively* to a *particular Congregation*, that I do not believe that any member of a *particular* "*Church* was ever *regularly baptized*; baptiſme precedes *Admiſſion* in- "to *Church membership* as to a *particular Church*, the Subject of it is "*profeſſing Believers* and their Seed, as ſuch, they have right unto it, "whether they be joyned to any *particular Church*, or no, ſuitable to "this Judgment ha's been my *Conſtant* and *uninterrupted practice*.

Likewiſe Doctor *Nathaniel Homes* in his defence of *Infant Baptiſme* againſt Mr. *Tombs*, ha's theſe words, (*pag 193.*) "for baptizing of "Believers Infants, ſeveral Churches of us do hold, that we may bap- "tize them, though neither of their Parents be of our *particular Chur-* "*ches*. Baptiſme as we conceive being an *Admiſſion* into the *univer-* "*ſal viſible Church*, &c. And again, (*pag 217.*) Mr. *Tombs* having made this Objection, "that the baptizing of Infants ha's occaſioned an "unneceſſary diſpute about baptizing the Infants of believing Parents, "that are not members of *gathered Churches*. I never (ſaith Doctor "*Homes*) perceived the world troubled with this diſpute, divers Chur- "ches without diſpute can practice the baptizing of ſuch, &c. Thus he. See alſo in the ſame Book, *207, 208, 215.* with his Epiſtle to the Reader. And the Collector of theſe Teſtimonies hath lately received Letters from *ſundry eminent Divines* of the *Congregational way* in *England*, declaring that the *Judgement* of the *Elders* with them is generally

according to what hath been now expreſſed. By theſe things therefore, which have been thus far expreſſed, it is very manifeſt that the doctrine of the late Synod concerning the Subject of Baptiſme is no Apoſtacy from the *firſt Principles of* New-England, *nor yet any declenſion from the Congregational way.* It remaineth that we proceed to the other Queſtion about *Communion and Conſociation of Churches.* Now concerning that, it is leſs needful to produce *many Teſtimonies*, that there in the Synod *Introduceth* not any *Innovation.* For ſome that diſſented from the Anſwer to the firſt Queſtion about Baptiſme, yet in this laſt concurred, yea, there was an *unanimous and univerſal Aſſent* to the Anſwer given to this ſecond Queſtion, as the Author of the *Antiſynodalia Americana* does acknowledge, where (*pag.* 12.) it is ſaid *in the ſecond Queſtion we do fully agree with the reſt of the Synod, in all the Propoſitions laid down about it together with the Proofs thereof*, we ſhall therefore amongſt our *New Engliſh Worthies*, only mention the Judgement of Mr. *Cotton* concerning this Queſtion, which what it is may be ſeen largly expreſſed in his Book of the *Keyes*, *pag.* 54, &c. And there are thoſe that will remember, that when that eminent Miniſter of Chriſt Mr. *Mitchel* was ordained Paſtor of the Church in *Cambridg*, Mr. *Cotton* giving in the Name of the Meſſengers of Churches, *the right hand of Fellowſhip*, ſeriouſly adviſed him to endeavour (And that faithful man was ever mindful of that ſolemn Advice) that that Ordinance of *Conſociation of Churches* might be duly practiſed, greatly bewailing the defect of theſe Churches, as to that particular, yea, Mr. *Cottons* heart was much upon this thing, in his latter time; foreſeeing that without it, theſe Churches and the *Congregational way* could not ſtand; He did therefore not long before his deceaſe, draw up ſome *Propoſitions* which are expreſſive of the way and manner of this *Conſociation* pleaded for, which becauſe they are (as being written by his hand, they cannot but be) of great weight and worth, we ſhall therefore here inſert and publiſh them.

"*Propoſitions Concerning Conſociation and Communion of Churches,*
"*tendred to the Elders and Brethren of the Church for their Conſidera-*
"*tion and acceptance according to God.*

Propoſition I.

"Every true Church of Chriſt, *viz.* a *particular Congregation* furniſhed with a *Preſbytery*, and walking in the truth and peace of the

Goſpel,

"Goſpel, hath received from the *Lord Jeſus full Power Eccleſiaſtical* "within it ſelf, both of Liberty to receive her own members, to chooſe "her own Officers and the like. And alſo of Authority to Adminiſter "Sacraments, Cenſure her own offenders, and reſtore penitents, *Mat. 18* "*18: 1 Cor 5. Acts 6. 2*, &c. and *14 23.* ſo as this *Conſociation and* "*Communion of Churches* ought not to hinder the exerciſe of this pow- "er, but only by Counſel from the word to direct and ſtrengthen their "hands, in the right Adminiſtration thereof upon all juſt occaſions.

Propoſition II.

"Although the Apoſtles of Chriſt were *Independent* on each other, "and had equally the *higheſt Power Eccleſiaſtical under Chriſt*, and "were led with *Infallible Aſſiſtance* of the Spirit in the exerciſe there- "of, yet *Paul* with *Barnabas* and *Titus* went up to *Jeruſalem*, (and "that by *Revelation*) not only to Confer and Conſult with the Apo- "ſtles about his doctrine, (left he had, or ſhould *run in vain*, Gal 2. 1, "2.) but alſo Conſociated or made Agreement with them by mutual "giving *the right hand of Fellowſhip*, to diſpoſe the Courſe of their "Miniſtry and Proviſion for the poor, that ſo they might procure the "more free and effectual paſſage of the fruit of the Goſpel, and the "work of their Miniſtry, and therefore it may ſeem much rather, not "only lawful, but alſo very profitable and needful for ordinary Elders, "(and Churches though equal in Power) wanting that *Infallible Aſſi-* "*ſtance* of the Spirit to Confer, and Conſult, and Conſociate or agree "together about all ſuch weighty matters, in which Counſel and Con- "currence of Judgment may be requiſite to prevent and heal errors and "offences, to avoid Suſpition of prejudice, and partiality, and ſo to "expedite the free paſſage of the Goſpel in the hands of them all.

Propoſition III.

"If when *Peter* gave offence at *Antioch*, the Apoſtle *Paul* took "Liberty to rebuke him before them all, (though he was his equal in "place and power) and that no doubt out of that duty of love and "faithfulneſs, which he owed unto him and to the truth, *Peter* alſo "ſubmitting thereunto, then it may well ſtand with the equality of "Churches out of their duty of Love and Faithfulneſs to admonith each "other in caſe of publick offence, and ſubmit to ſuch admonition "from the word in meekneſs of wiſdom, as to the will and Authority

"of Christ, and to give such Satisfaction as the Rule doth require.

Proposition IV.

"Out of Question, *the Lord Iesus, the head, King and Compassionate* "*high Priest and Saviour of his body the Church, hath as great a Love* "*and care of the purity, Peace and Edification of whole Churches*, as of "particular Saints as is evident by those *Epistles sent to the Churches of* "Corinth, Galatia, *and the seven Churches of* Asia, to heal the publick "Errors, dissentions, and other Corruptions found in them, and there-"fore certainly he hath appointed and sanctified some sufficient meane "to preserve their purity and peace, to heal and help the evils and "distempers of whole Churches, as well as of particular Believers. "Now then since Apostles and other extraordinary Officers are ceased, "(that had power in all Churches, and only Love remaineth) what "other Ecclesiastical help is there left without infringing the power "of particular Churches, but the Exercise of brotherly Love, mutual "watchfulness, Brotherly Care, and Counsell) which Elders and Chur-"ches ought therefore to practice towards each other in this way of "Brotherly Communion and Assistance on all just occasions.

Proposition V.

"Upon these and other Scripture grounds and Examples, and for "the ends above said, it is very meet and requisite, (according to our "present practice) that when any Company of Christians intend to "unite themselves into the Fellowship of a Church, or being in a "Church state to elect and ordain any Elders over them, that in due "time they signify their intentions to the Neighbouring Churches, "walking in the order of the Gospel, if such may be had, desiring their "presence, Assistance, and *right hand of Fellowship*, that as a Church is "a City *set upon a Hill*, so the Acts thereof may not be as *a Light put* "*under a bushel*, but may so shine forth to all other Churches, behold-"ing and approving their orderly proceedings, as they may the more "readily give them *the right hand of Fellowship*, and walk with more "freedom of Spirit in Brotherly Love and Communion with them in "the Lord.

Propoſition VI.

"In ſuch matters of publick Cenſure, wherein through the obſcurity "and difficulty thereof, or otherwiſe, there doth ariſe differences ten- "ding to dangerous Diviſions and diſtractions in the Church, or of- "fence to other Churches, In all ſuch Caſes it is meet and requiſite "that the Church proceed advi[s]edly with the Counſel and Concur- "rence of the Elder, or Elders, with other Judicious and impartial "Bretheren of other Churches, clearing up from the Word, what is the "mind and will of Chriſt to be done.

Propoſition VII.

"Not only in matters of Cenſure, but alſo in other Caſes of Doctrine "or practice, wherein for want of Light or of the Spirit of meekneſs "and Love, there doth grow diſſention in any Church (as did in the "Church of *Antioch* about Circumciſion) The Church ſo divided ſhall "do wiſely and ſafely, *not to proceed to determine the Caſe by a Major "Vote, to the unſatisfaction and offence of a Conſiderable part among "themſelves*, or the offence of other Churches. But ought rather to "bring the matter to the hearing and Judgement of other Elders and "Brethren of other Churches: who being deſired ought readily to meet "together, and ſeriouſly (as in the fear of God) to enquire into the "Caſe, ſearch out by the word, what is the mind of Chriſt therein, by "themſelves, (if preſent) or otherwiſe, by Letters and Meſſengers to "declare to the Church, what they judge to be the Rule of Chriſt which "they ſhould walk by, which Judgement ought to be received with all "due reſpect according to God, *Acts 15.*

Propoſition VIII.

"As there is a Brotherhood of members in the ſame Church, ſo there "is a Brotherhood of Churches, being all Fellow members of Chriſt "Jeſus, and ſo bound to have a mutual Care one of another, *Cant. 8.* "It is therefore meet and requiſite, that in Caſe any Church ſhall fall "into any ſcandalous error or offence in doctrine or practice, then the "Neighbour Church or Churches ſhould Advertize, Convince, and ad- "moniſh ſuch a Church thereof according to the Rule of the Goſpel. And "if after due Conviction by a Neighbour Church, and again by more "Churches, the offending Church as the nature of the offence and the

reſpect

"reſpect due to a Church of Chriſt may require, may at length with-
"draw, the Church with ſufficient patience will not yet hearken to
"their Brethren; then withdraw from that Church, or at leaſt that part
"of it which refuſe to be healed, ſuch Brotherly Communion and the
"fruits thereof, as otherwiſe Churches uſually do afford to each other.

Propoſition IX.

"In Caſe any member ſhall be laid under Cenſure in a Church by
"the Major part with the offence of a Conſiderable part thereof, or
"when any whole Church ſhall ſeem to have Conſented corruptly to
"ſuch a Cenſure, upon Complaint of the grieved part atteſted by the
"diſſenting Brethren, or in the other Caſe, by other credible perſons, it
"is free, yea, requiſite that other Church, or Churches, in the Spirit of
"meekneſs deſire to know the Reaſon of their Cenſure, which if the
"Church ſhall clear up to be juſt, then the other Church or Churches
"ought to bear witneſs to their proceedings, and to perſwade the
"Cenſured and diſſenting part of the Church to ſubmit and give ſatis-
"faction. But if the Church ſhall refuſe to give an account of the Reaſons
"of their proceedings, or not finally clear up the Juſtice thereof, nor
eaſe the grieved party, it will then be equal for any other Church to
receive the Cenſured part to their Covenant or Communion.

For ſo Chriſt received the blind man, after he was unjuſtly Caſt
out of the Synogogue, *Joh.* 9. The unjuſt acts of any Church cannot
appear to be done, in the name of Chriſt; but rather in the abuſe
of his name and power, and therefore do not bind in Heaven, *Clavis*
errans non Ligat.

Propſition. X.

"As it is the practiſe of Godly Chriſtians in the Churches (without
"any Scruple, and with much Edification and increaſe of Love) to meet
"together in Convenient numbers of Families at Set times, houſe by
"houſe, to exerciſe that Chriſtian Communion, which the moral Rules
"of the Goſpel call for, *1 Theſ.* 5. 11. *Col.* 3. 16. *Heb.* 3. 13. and to
24. ſo alſo upon the ſame grounds, [beſides others] it would [by the
"bleſſing of God] conduce much to the increaſe of brotherly Love and
"Unity, the ſpiritual Edification of many, by mutual Faith of each
"other, to the ſtrengthening of the hearts and hands of one another
"in the work of the Lord, If the Elders and brethren of the Churches,

did

"did meet together, Church by Church, in Convenient numbers, at ſet "times, (not to exerciſe any Jurisdiction over any,) but to enjoy and "practice Church Communion by prayer together, hearing the word "preached, and Conference about ſuch Caſes and Queſtions of Con-"ſcience, as ſhall be found uſeful or needful for the edification and "Comfort, and peace of every Church, or any of the Brethren thereof, "and this Courſe might tend much to ſatisfy the Spirits of divers god-"ly Brethren, who have thought that we ſo much mind the diſtinction "of particular Churches, and the duties of fellow members in the ſame, "that we looſe much of the Comfort of Love, and the Fellowſhip of the "Spirit, which we might enjoy, and that we fall ſhort in ſome brotherly "Love which we owe mutually to our dear Brethren of ſeveral Chur-"ches.

For the better Improvement of ſuch a Conference.

1. "It is fit that the Number of Churches ſo to meet, be regulated "according to the *nearneſs* or *diſtance* of Churches, and as other Conve-"niences, or Inconveniences ſhall require.

2. "For the times of meeting, it may ſeem beſt to leave it to the "wiſdome of each Society of Churches, to meet more frequently or "ſeldom as they ſhall ſee Cauſe.

3. "Concerning their Exerciſes, it is meet that the Elders of each "Church where the Conference is to be held, ſhould chooſe with Con-"ſent of the Church ſome other Elder as they ſee beſt, whom they "may intreat to preach at their meeting, and alſo to deſire ſome to mo-"derate in the Conference, and agree upon ſuch Queſtions as they ſee "fit, three or four, and ſend them to the Elders of other Churches, at "leaſt *fourteen dayes* before the time of their Aſſembly.

4. "For the ordering of the Time, it may be fit that the Sermon ſhould "end at Eleven a Clock, and after it the Conference follow, and con-"tinue ſo long, as ſhall be found meet and ſeaſonable.

"*Now our Lord Jeſus Chriſt himſelf who is the Counſellour, the Ever-*"*laſting Father, and Prince of Peace, grant unto all his Churches truth* "*and Peace always, and by all means: and He counſel and guide the* "*hearts of his people to diſcern and embrace all ſuch wayes as himſelf hath* "*ſanctified, to thoſe holy Ends. Amen.*

Thus farr Mr. *Cotton*. And that this is according to *Congregational Principles*, is evident from other *Teſtimonies*; For the Meſſengers of *an hundred and twenty Congregational Churches*, who met at the *Savoy* in *London*, *Anno 1658.* do in their declaration of the order ap-

appointed in the Churches of Chriſt (*Theſis 26.*) thus declare. "In Caſe of "difficulties or differences either in point of doctrine, or in *Adminiſtra-* "*tions*, wherein either the Churches in general are concerned, or any "one Church in their *Peace*, *Union*, and *Edification*, or any mem- "ber, or members of any Church are injured in, or by any proceeding "in *Cenſures* not agreeable to *Truth* and *Order*: It is according to the "mind of Chriſt, that many Churches holding *Communion* together, "do by their *Meſſengers* meet in a *Synod* or *Council* to Conſider and "give their Advice in or about the matter in difference, &c. And Doctor *Owen* (who was a great part of that *Aſſembly*) in his *Ca-* *techiſme* concerning *Church diſcipline*, (*pag. 224,226,227.*) thus ex- preſſes his Judgement. "Churches being *gathered* and *ſetled* accord- "ing to the mind of Chriſt, ought to preſerve a *mutual holy Communi-* "*on* amongſt themſelves, and to exerciſe it in the diſcharge of thoſe du- "ties, whereby their *mutual good* and *Edification* may be *promoted*. "In deſiring or making uſe of the Counſel and advice of one another "in ſuch Caſes of doubt and difficulty, whether *Doctrinal* or *practical*, "as may ariſe in any of them, *Acts 15.2,6.* And from hence it follows, "that in Caſe any Church either by error in *Doctrine*, or *precipitation*, "or miſtake in other *Adminiſtrations*, do give offence unto other "Churches, thoſe other Churches may require an account from them, "admoniſh them of their faults, and withhold *Communion* from them, "in Caſe they perſiſt in the error of their way, and that becauſe in their "difficulties, and before their *miſcariages*, they were bound to have "deſired the advice, Counſel, and Aſſiſtance of thoſe other Churches, "which being neglected by them; the other are to recover the end of it "unto their *utmoſt ability*, *Gal 2.6,11.* And hence alſo it follows, that "thoſe that are rightly and *juſtly Cenſured* in any Church ought to be "rejected by all Churches what ever, both becauſe of their *mutual* "*Communion*, and becauſe it is, and ought to be preſumed, until the "contrary be made to appear, that in Caſe there had been any difficul- "ty or doubt in the proceedure of the Church, they would have taken "the advice of thoſe Churches, with whom they were obliged to Con- "ſult. Thus far Doctor *Owen*. Likewiſe Doctor *Thomas Goodwin*, and Mr. *Philip Nye* in that *worthy Epiſtle* which they have prefixed be- fore Mr. *Cotton's* book of the *Keyes*, (in which *Epiſtle* the *Congregatio-* *nal way* is truly ſtated and aſſerted, as it differs from both the extreams, *viz.* from *Preſbyterianiſme* on the one, and *Browniſme* on the other hand) do declare their Concurrence with him in acknowledging "that "an *Aſſociation* or *Communion of Churches* ſending their *Elders* and

Meſſengers

" *Meſſengers* into a *Synod*, is an *Ordinance* of Chriſt, unto whom Chriſt " hath (in Relation to rectifying *male Adminiſtrations*, and healing " *Diſſentions* in *particular Congregations*, and the like Caſes) com- " mitted a due and juſt meaſure of power ſuited and proportioned to " thoſe Ends, and furniſhed them not only with ability to give Coun- " ſel and Advice, but further upon ſuch like occaſions, with *Miniſteri-* " *al power and Authority* to determine, declare, and injoyne ſuch things " as may tend to the reducing *Congregations* to *right order* and *Peace*, " ſee *pag.* 4. 6, 7, 10.

Moreover, that the *practice* of *Congregationals*, ha's been according to this *Profeſſion*, may be ſeen in the *Apologetical Narration* publiſhed by Doctor *Goodwin*. Mr. *Philip Nye*, Mr. *Sydrach Simpſon*. Mr. *Burroughs and* Mr. *Bridg*. In as much as thoſe *famous Apologiſts* (as *Paul* ſpeaks concerning *Iames*, *Cephas* and *Iohn* amongſt the Apoſtles) *ſeem to be Pillars*, [and *worthily* are they ſo accounted) amongſt *Congregationals*. Since alſo that *Apologetical Narration* (though printed) is in the hands of but few with us, we ſhall therefore here tranſcribe and inſert ſome pages of it. And therein they thus declare [ſee *pag.* 15. to *pag.* 22.] " And whereas [ſay they] the *Common prejudice* " and *exception* laid into all mens thoughts againſt us, and our opinions " is, that in ſuch *Congregational Government* thus entire within it ſelf, " there is not allowed ſufficient remedy for miſcarriages, though never " ſo groſs, no relief for *wrongful Sentences*, or perſons injured thereby, " no room for Complaints, no powerful or effectual means to reduce a " Church, or Churches that fall into *Hereſie*, *Schiſme*, &c. but every " one is left, and may take Liberty without controul, to *do what is good* " *in their own eyes*, we have [through the good Providence of God up- " on us] from the *avowed declarations* of our Judgements among our " Churches *mutually* during our *Exile*, and that alſo confirmed by the " moſt *ſolemn Inſtance* of our practice, wherewith to vindicate our ſelves " and *way* in this particular, which upon no other occaſion we ſhould " ever have made thus publick. God ſo ordered it, that a *Scandal* and " *offence* fell out, between thoſe very *Churches*, whilſt living in this *Ba-* " *niſhment*, [whereof we our ſelves that write theſe things were then " the Miniſters] one of our Churches having unhappily depoſed one of " their Miniſters, the others judged it not only too ſuddain an act, " [having proceeded in a matter of ſo great moment without conſult- " ing their *Sister Churches*, as was publickly profeſſed, we ſhould have " done in ſuch Caſes of concernment] but alſo in the proceedings there- " of, as too *ſevere*, and not managed according to the Rules laid down

"in the Word. In this Caſe our Churches did *mutually* acknowledge
"and ſubmit to this, as a *Sacred* and *undoubted Principle*, and *Supream*
"*Law* to be obſerved amongſt all Churches, that as by virtue of the
"*Apoſtolical Command* Churches as well as *particular men*, are bound
"to *give no offence*, *neither to Iew nor Gentile*, *nor the Churches of God*
"they live amongſt. So, that in all Caſes ſuch offence or differences by
"the *Obligation* of the *Common Law* of *Communion of Churches*, and
"for the Vindication of the glory of Chriſt which in *Common* they hold
"forth, the Church or Churches challenged to offend or differ, are to
"ſubmit themſelves (upon the Challenge of the offence or Complaint
"of the perſon wronged) to the moſt full and open tryal and ex-
"amination by other *Neighbour Churches* offended thereat, of what
"ever ha's given the offence. And further, that by virtue of the
"ſame and like Law of *not partaking of other mens ſins*, the Church of-
"fended may, and ought upon the *Impenitency* of thoſe Churches per-
"ſiſting in their Errors and miſcarriage to pronounce that *heavy Sen-*
"*tence* againſt them of *withdrawing* and *Renouncing* all *Chriſtian Com-*
"*munion* with them, until they do *repent*, and further to declare and
"proteſt this with the Cauſes thereof to all other Churches of Chriſt,
"that they may do the like. And what further *Authority* or proceed-
"ings *purely Eccleſiaſtical* of one or many Churches towards another
"whole Church, or Churches offending; either the Scriptures do hold
"forth, or can rationally be put in Execution (without the *Magiſtrates*
"*interpoſing* a power or another nature, unto which we upon his *parti-*
"*cular Cognizance* and *Examination* of ſuch Cauſes, profeſs ever to
"ſubmit, and alſo to be moſt willing to have recourſe unto) for our
"parts we ſaw not then, nor do yet ſee. And likewiſe we did then
"Suppoſe, (and do yet) that this Principle of *Submiſſion* of Churches
"that miſcarry, unto other Churches offended, together with this other,
"that it is a Command from Chriſt enjoyned to Churches that are
"*finally offended* to denounce ſuch a Sentence of *non Communion* and
"*withdrawing* from them whilſt *Impenitent*, as unworthy to hold forth
"the Name of Chriſt, (theſe *Principles* being received and *generally*
"*acknowledged* by the Churches of Chriſt to be a *mutual duty* as ſtrictly
"enjoyned them by Chriſt as any other) that theſe would be as effectu-
"al means through the bleſſing of Chriſt to awe and preſerve Churches
"and their *Elders* in their duties, As that other of Claim to an *Au-*
"*thoritative Power Eccleſiaſtical* to *Excommunicate* other Churches, or
"their *Elders offending*; for if the one be compared with the other, in
"a *meer Eccleſiaſtical Notion*, that of *Excommunication* pretended,

hath,

"hath but this more in it, that it is a *Delivery* of *whole Churches* and "their *Elders offending* unto Satan, (for which we know no warrant "in the Scriptures that Churches ſhould have ſuch a power over other "Churches.) And then as for the binding Obligation, both of the one "way and the other, it can be ſuppoſed to lye but in theſe two things.

1. "In a warrant and *Injunction given* by Chriſt to his Churches, "to put either the one or the other into Execution. And 2. *That mens* "*Conſciences be accordingly taken therewith, ſo as to Subject themſelves* "*whether unto the one way or the other.* For ſuppoſe that other Princi- "ple of *Authoritative Power* in the greater part of the Churches com- "bined to *Excommunicate* other Churches, &c. To be the Or- "dinance of God, yet unleſs it do take hold of mens Conſci- "ences, and be received amongſt all Churches, the *offending Chur-* "*ches* will ſlight all ſuch *Excommunications*, as much as they may, "be ſuppoſed to do our way of *proteſtation and Sentence of non Commu-* "*nion*. On the other ſide, Let this way of ours be but as *ſtrongly enter-* "*tained*, as that which is the way and Command of Chriſt; and upon "all occaſions be heedfully put in *Execution*, it will awe mens Conſci- "ences as much, and produce the ſame Effects. And if the *Magiſtrates* "*Power* (to which we give as much and (as we think) more, then the "Principles of the *Preſbyterial Government* will ſuffer them to yield,): "do but aſſiſt and back the *Sentence* of other Churches *denouncing* this "*Non Communion* againſt *Churches miſcarrying* according to the na- "ture of the Crime as they judge meet, and as they would the *Sentence* "of Churches *Excommunicating* other Churches in ſuch Caſes upon "their own *particular Judgement* of the Cauſe, then without all Con- "troverſy, this our way of *Church proceeding*, will be every way as ef- "fectual, as their other can be ſuppoſed to be; and we are ſure more "brotherly and more ſuited to that Liberty and equality Chriſt hath en- "dowed his Church with. But without the *Magiſtrates interpoſing* "their *Authority*, their way of proceeding will be as *ineffectual* "as ours, and more liable to *Contempt*, by how much it is pretended to "be more *Authoritative*, and to inflict more dreadful punishment "which carnal Spirits are ſeldom ſenſible of. This for our Judge- "ments. And for a full evidence and demonſtration; both, that "this was then our Judgements, as likewiſe for an inſtance of the effe- "ctual Succeſs of ſuch a Courſe held by Churches in ſuch Caſes, our own "practice and the bleſſing of God thereon may plead and teſtify for us "to all the world. The manage of this Tranſaction, in brief was this. "That Church which with others was moſt Scandalized, did by Letters

"declare their offence, requiring of the Church ſupoſed to be offend-
"ing, in the Name, and for the *vindication* of the honour of Chriſt, and
"the relieving the *party wronged*, to yield a *full* and *publick hearing* be-
"fore all the *Churches* of our Nation, or any other whomſoever of-
"fended, of what they could give in Charge againſt their proceedings,
"in that *depoſition* of their Miniſter, and to ſubmit themſelves to an
"*open Tryal* and review of all thoſe *forepaſſed Carriages* that concerned
"that particular: which they moſt chearfully and readily (according
"to the forementioned Principles) ſubmitted unto in a place and ſtate,
"where no *outward violence* or any other *external Authority* either *Ci-*
"*vil* or *Eccleſiaſtical* would have enforced them thereunto. And ac-
"cordingly the Miniſters of the Church offended, with other two
"Gentlemen of much worth, wiſdom and Piety, members thereof,
"were ſent as Meſſengers from that Church; and at the *Introduction*
"and *enterance* into that *Solemn Aſſembly*, (the *Solemnity* of which
"ha's left as deep an *Impreſſion* upon our hearts of *Chriſts dreadful pre-*
"*ſence*, as ever any we have been preſent at.) It was openly and pub-
"lickly profeſſed in a Speech that was the Preface to that *diſcuſſion* to
"this Effect, *that it was the moſt to be abhorred maxime, that any Reli-*
gion ha's ever made profeſſion of, and therefore of all other the moſt contra-
dictory and diſhonourable unto that of Chriſtianity, that a ſingle, and par-
ticular Society of men profeſſing the Name of Chriſt, and pretending to be en-
dowed with a power from Chriſt to judge them that are of the ſame body, and
Society within themſelves, ſhould further arrogate to themſelves an exemp-
tion from giving account, or being Cenſurable of any other either Chriſti-
an Magiſtrate above them, or Neighbour Churches about them. So farr
were our Judgements from that Independent Liberty that is imputed
to us, then, when we had leaſt dependency on this Kingdome, or ſo much as
hopes ever to abide therein in peace.

"And for the Iſſue and Succeſs of this agitation after there had been
"for many dayes as Judiciary and full a Charge, tryal and depoſition
"of witneſſes openly before all Commers of all Sorts as can be expected,
"in any Court where *Authority* enjoyns it, that Church which had of-
"fended did as publickly acknowledge their *ſinful aberration* in it, re-
"ſtored their Miniſter to his place again, And ordered a *Solemn day*
"for faſting, to humble themſelves before God and men for their ſin-
"ful Carriage in it, and the party alſo which had been depoſed, did ac-
"knowledge to that Church, wherein he had likewiſe ſinned,

So that theſe *Godly Learned Writers*, were ſo far from making a *Popedome* of a particular Church that they deemed it an *abhorred maxime*

maxime to affirme that a particular Church is *unaccountable to*, or not Cenſurable by *Neighbour Churches* about them; They therefore that do reject the *Coſociation or Communion* pleaded for, want that which is one *Speciſical Character* of a true *Congregational man*, whereby ſuch are diſtinguiſhed from *Browniſts and Morellians*, whoſe Principles have ever been diſowned and diſavowed by *Congregationals*, who have alſo thought themſelves not a little injured, when they have been repreſented as the ſame, elſe how have *Hornbeck Summa Controverſiarum de Browniſtis*, and *Bailies diſſuaſive*, and other writings, *ejuſdem commatis* been ſo diſtaſtful and diſſatisfactory to all of that way, who underſtand what Principles they go upon.

Moreover that our Congregational Brethren are for ſuch Communion of Churches as is by the late Synod aſſerted, is yet farr more evident from the Teſtimony of *bleſſed Burroughs* in his *Excellent Treatiſe* about *heart Diviſions* ſee *pag. 84.* and *163.* And in *pag. 43, 44.* There are theſe words. (1.) "Thoſe in the *Congregational way* acknowledge "that they are bound in Conſcience to give account of their wayes to "Churches about them, or to any other who ſhall require it, this not in "an *Arbitrary way*, but as a duty that they owe to God and man.

2 *dly.* "They acknowledge that *Synods* of other Miniſters and Elders "about them are an Ordinance of Jeſus Chriſt for the helping the "Church againſt Errors, *Schiſmes*, and *Scandals*.

3 *dly.* "That theſe *Synods* may by the Power they have from Chriſt "admoniſh men or Churches in his Name, when they ſee evils Conti-"nuing in, or growing upon the Church, and their Admonitions car-ry with them the *Authority* of Jeſus Chriſt.

4 *ly.* "As there ſhall be cauſe they may declare men or Churches, to "be *Subverters* of the *Faith*, or otherwiſe, according to the nature of "the offence, to ſhame them before all the Churches about them.

5 *ly.* "They may by a *Solemn act* in the Name of Jeſus Chriſt refuſe "any further *Communion* with them till they repent.

6 *ly.* "They may declare alſo in the Name of Chriſt that theſe erring "people, or Churches are not to be received into *Fellowſhip* with any "of the Churches of Chriſt, nor to have *Communion* with one another "in the Ordinances of Chriſt.——You will ſay, what if they care "not for all this? *Anſw.* That is, as if you ſhould ſay, what if they be "not Conſcientious, what if nothing can prevail with Conſcience? "if you ſay, private Brethren may admoniſh and declare in the Name "of Chriſt. This is more then if any private Brethren ſhould do the "ſame thing; For a *Synod* is a *Solemn Ordinance* of Chriſt, and the

Elders

"Elders are to be looked upon as the Officers of Jesus Christ. And "again, *pag.*47. he ha's these words, If it shall be said, But surely they "do not agree so farr, they do not come up to these six things mention-"ed? To that I Answer, I do not in these deliver only mine own Judge-"ment, but by what I know of the Judgements of all those Brethren, "with whom I have occasion to Converse by Conference, both before, "and since, I stand Charged to make it good, to be their Judgements "also, yea, it hath been theirs and mine, for divers years, even then "when we never thought to have enjoyed our own Land again. And "if it be so, then let the Lord be Judge between us and our Brethren, for "those *loud and grievous out-Cries*, there ha's been against us in this "thing.

Μόνῳ σοφῷ Θεῷ σωτῆρι δόξα

POSTSCRIPT

POSTSCRIPT

SInce the Compoſure of this Collection of Teſtimonies, *it hath pleaſed the Lord to take unto himſelf another of our Antient Studs, viz. worthy and Reverend* Mr. Allin *of* Dedham, *whoſe Apprehenſions touching the Controverted Queſtions is ſufficiently known. Likewiſe not many weeks before his death, he read this Script, and expreſſed his judgement thereon in words following.*

"Reverend and dear Brother, I ſalute you in the Lord. I humbly "bleſs God for your fruitful Labours in this your *Collection*, (and in "other matters performed by you) concerning which in general, I "think it is worthy ſerious Conſultation amongſt your Friends, whe-"ther it be not a Seaſon to publiſh the ſame. (1.) We ſee the work "of Chriſt touching the *Church Seed is laid aſleep*, this might awaken "our *drowſineſs*, we ſee alſo the *great diſorders* in Churches for want "of ſeaſonable help from *Neighbouring Churches*, and by Reaſon of the "rejection of Counſel without convincing their Sentence of error.

2 *dly.* "We ſee how our preſent doctrine is rejected as a *Novel Inno-"vation*, differing from *firſt* and *primitive Principles*. (3.) Who "knoweth how farr God may bleſs this *Treatiſe* to the recovery of ſome "if not many, from their *Erroneous Opinions* about theſe Truths.

"I Conceive alſo ſome ſerious Exhortation to cleave to *theſe firſt "wayes* of Chriſt in *New England*, might be ſeaſonably added, I Reſt

Yours in our Lord,
John Allin.

A Letter concerning the Subject of Baptiſme, written by that eminent Miniſter of Chriſt Mr. *Ionathan Mitchel, late Paſtor of the Church in* Cambridg *in* New England.

Reverend and dear Sir,

I have deliberately read over Mr. *D*'s. *Eſſay* and Epiſtle to the Reader, which I now return to you with thanks for the *Loan* of it, If I ſhould ſay, I ſee not matter of Conviction in it, his Anſwer is already given me, (*pag.35*) "If men ſhut their eyes, when the light is "held out to them, they may truly ſay they ſee not, or in *pag.6.* they "that Enquire of God with an *Idol in their hearts*, ſhall be *penally* an-"ſwered by being left to their own Counſels, *&c.* we had need Labour to approve our ſelves to God, when we meet with ſuch *ſharp Cenſures* from men But the *R. A.* can hardly expect, we ſhould find Conviction here, ſeeing he builds all upon this diſtinction of *Immediate* and *mediate memberſhip*, which with the *Conſectaries* He deduceth from it, is the *prora & puppis* of his whole diſcourſe: and for the proof of the diſtinction, himſelf, in (*pag.34,35.*) refers the Reader to his *former Eſſays*; neither have I obſerved much more in this writing, toward the proof of it, then we have had before. And therefore if we did not ſee it (as by him explained and Improved) to be evident before, it is not ſtrange, if we do not ſee it now. If it muſt be imputed to our *blindneſs* (yea, *wilful* and *penal blindneſs*) that we ſee it not, we muſt be Content, to bear it as we may. Alſo when he affirms over and over (*pag.75,83,92,103, 131,145,152.*) that we our ſelves Confeſs the Parents in Queſtion have not Faith, or are not *viſible Believers*, the Contrary whereunto we have plainly aſſerted. And how many times over does he ſay it, [we call them *meer members*] which we have diſclaimed, and do not ſo call them but, [members not in *full Communion*] yea, he ſayes, (*in pag.49.*) we grant that the perſons in Queſtion, are not to be accounted *Church members*, &c. How ſhould we receive Conviction from ſuch diſcourſes? If his meaning be by ſo often reflecting on [our *meer members* as he calls them] to deny that diſtinction of members into [ſuch as are in *full Communion*, and ſuch as are not in *full Communion*] that would ſeem ſtrange, for how can that be denyed by any *Pedobaptiſt*, and he ſeems to approve it in *pag.35.* yea, he ſeems ſometimes to grant, that ſome when *Adult* do Continue in the Church and Covenant, who yet are not admitted to *full Communion*, *pag.76.99*, yet he calls for a Rule for two ſuch ſorts of *Adult members*, *pag.73.* But I ſhall not enter

enter into diſcourſe of *particulars*, nor am I fit to be an Anſwerer, it is eaſie to obſerve a *greater ſharpneſs* in his Expreſſions to me then elſe where in this Book. I hope I ſhall Conſider as I am able, what I find in this, or other diſcourſes, about the matter in Controverſy, &c. and if I be convinced of Error, I ſhall not be aſhamed to own it, but if there be no way to Iſſue the *Controverſy* but by ſuch *voluminous writings*, and if every paſſage be not ſpoken to, he counts himſelf neglected, or unanſwered; And that which he hath before ſaid ſtands ſtill firm and good, (as to that purpoſe he ſpeaks in this Book above twenty times) I have little hope to ſee an Iſſue of it, nor can I ſee any likely way for an Iſſue, unleſs we can meet, (either in way of *Synod* or *Colloquie*) and with *freedom* and *Candor verbally* and *fully* diſcourſe the matter, and agree to ſome *orderly Concluſion*. *As for the Subſtance of the Cauſe, wherein we have engaged, I am daily more and more Confirmed, that it is the Cauſe of Truth, and of Chriſt, and that wherein not a little of the Intereſt of Chriſts Kingdome, and of the Souls of men is laid up.* I have heard you intimate, as if there were failings in the manner of Calling, and the managing of the *late Synod*, and you ſpeak of your *expunging* ſome paſſages in what paſſed the Preſs, which would have diſcovered the nakedneſs of the contrary minded, (though I ſuppoſe if they had been printed, they wou'd have diſcovered more the nakedneſs of the Author, or Authors, then of the Subjects of thoſe Expreſſions and Informations.) And I once had an Intimation, as if ſome had gathered up a *Narrative* of matters that would ſhame us much, if it ſhould be publiſhed. To all which I would ſay, I do not know of any ſuch great matter, that can be objected, *or of ought Conſiderable*, that would ſeem ſtrange [if things be rightly repreſented] among men of Infirmity as we all are. And ſome of us were not ſlow in the *open Synod*, and other wayes to own our ſelves ſuch, and to crave the *Candor* and *forbearance* that is needful for ſuch, which one would think *Chriſtian and ingenious Spirits* ſhould have been ſatisfied with. But if there were more to be objected that way, then there is, is that any Argument againſt the matter and Cauſe it ſelf? *Luthers Reformation* might be Condemned upon that ground, for all know that he wanted not many failings, in the management thereof. God loves to humble *Inſtruments*, and to leave matter of humbling upon them, even when they are carrying on his own good work; but I ſhould be ſorry if there were to be found with us the *Tyths of Irregularities* that abound among *our Anti Synodalian people in the Countrey, who ſtick not to deſpiſe, reproach, and diſtaſt Synods, and Miniſters, and all upon the account of this matter*, whereby I wiſh the Lord be not

provoked unto Anger. And how farr thoſe few in the Miniſtry that have appeared in oppoſition may have been acceſſary thereunto, I had rather they would ſeriouſly Conſider between the Lord and their own Souls, then I go about to determine. We have been reflected upon by ſome as ſeeking our ſelves, and driving on I know not what deſign, and I cannot readily Imagine, what *Self Intereſt* or *Self End* we here ſhou'd be led by in this matter. Sure I am for my own part, *that I prejudice my ſelf much, as to name, Intereſt, Eaſe,* &c. *For my appearing in this Cauſe.* Neither was I ſo inſenſible, as not to feel it from the firſt. I know my ſelf to be a *poor, vile, ſinful Creature,* and can with ſome feeling ſay, *chief of Sinners, and leaſt of Saints, but in this particular matter I have often ſaid, I wiſh my Brethren could ſee through me, for I know not any deſign or deſire I have in it, in all the world, but only that the will of God might be done among us, his Kingdome be advanced, theſe Churches ſetled on right Baſes, and flouriſh in the wayes of Truth, Purity and Peace,* and that the good of the Souls of men might be promoted both in this, and *after Generations.*

I am ſorry to ſpend thus many Lines about the *Circumſtantials* of the Cauſe; the prejudices that are thence taken up againſt it, have drawn me thus farr. But touching the matter it ſelf, that hath been in debate between us (which I had rather be diſcourſing of) you may pleaſe to Conſider at Leiſure which of theſe three Propoſitions you would deny.

1. *The whole viſible Church under the New Teſtament is to be baptized.*

2. *If a man be once in the Church (whether admitted at Age or in Infancy) nothing leſs then Cenſurable evil can put him out.*

3 *If the Parent be in the viſible Church his Infant Child is ſo alſo:*

The firſt is proved by the Arguments for the *Synods firſt Propoſition,* the ſecond is plain from the *Current* of *Scripture,* and Confirmed under the *New-Teſtament,* (beſides other Reaſons) from the Carriage of Chriſt and his Apoſtles towards the Jewes, who came into the Church by a *membership* received in *Infancy.* The third muſt be owned by all, but *Antipedo Baptiſts.* The Frame of the Covenant, *Gen, 17.* inferrs it, and Mr. *D. imprinted Eſſay,* pag 23. grants that the Promiſe of the Covenant does not ſtop at the *Infant Child. Theſe three things are all of them the doctrine of all our great Divines, as well as of the Scriptures.*

It is to my Confirmation to obſerve *de facto,* that in the way of *ſucceſſive baptizing* the Children of all that had a ſtanding in the *viſible Church* (though with too much *Laxeneſs* and *Corruption* for want of Diſcipline

Diſcipline) the Lord hath continued *Religion* among *Chriſtian People* from Age to Age, whereas the like Continuance and Preſervation of true Religion could not have been hoped for, nor probable in the Contrary way.

It was never heard of in the world from *Abraham* to this day [ſince God appointed an *entering Sign*, or ſuch *a Livery to be worn by his people to diſtinguiſh them from the world*] that a people did Continue for any length of Time to be Religious, who were either all, or the greater part of them *uncircumciſed* or *unbaptized*.

The laying aſide of *Circumciſion* among the *Midianites*, for that they did betimes lay it aſide; may be plainly gathered from *Exod.4.24,25, 26.* was quickly followed with the utter Loſs of all true Religion among them, and other of the Poſterity of *Abraham* and *Keturah*.

I know the bare having of Baptiſme does not alwayes keep true Religion but ſure it is, that the want of it will quickly loſe Religion among a people. To ſay that a people may be Religious well enough without Baptiſme, would be to reflect upon the wiſdom of Chriſt, in appointing ſuch an *external Sign* of *Chriſtianity*, which ſurely was no needleſs thing; It is eaſie to ſee that in the way your ſelf and ſome others go, *the bigger half of the people in this Country will in a little Time be unbaptized*, Mr. *D.* ſayes in his *Eſſay*, *page.55.* that our *meer members* as he calls them, will ſoon be a farr greater number then his *Sheep* and *Lambs*, *i. e.* then his *Immediate* and *mediate members*, both of them, and all the Generations of theſe *meer members* [as he calls them] he would have unbaptized, now I leave it to Conſideration, how *ſubverſive to Religion this will ſoon be*, *as alſo how abſurd a thing that a Chriſtian profeſſing people, yea, eminently profeſſing, and of a more reformed temper then ordinarily the world hath known.* [As through grace the body of people of this Country, yea, and of our members not in *full Communion* yet are] *ſhould ſo ſoon be the body of them unbaptized, as if they were not a Chriſtian, but an Heathen People.* Let me add this farther Conſideration, all *Diſciples* or [*Acts 11.26.*] *Chriſtians* are by Chriſt enjoyned to be baptized; *Math 28.19 Acts 11.26.* ſtates it upon theſe people that are called [named or counted] Chriſtians, I know there are that arrogate to themſelves the Name of Chriſtians who are *manifeſt Anti-Chriſtians*, *as Papiſts*, *Atheiſts*, &c.. theſe may be excluded, but thoſe who [*in regard both of their belief and practice*] do juſtly and rightly retain the Reputation of Chriſtians, as they that are deſcribed in our fifth Propoſition, and the *Generality* of the People in this Country cannot be denyed to do, ſurely *Chriſts Injunction* doth include them.

We may obſerve that Congregational men in England *are not without thoughts and ſtudies for enlargement of Baptiſme.* Doctor *Owen* in his late Catechiſme, is plainly with us in the main Subſtance of the Cauſe, viz. the baptizing of thoſe we plead for, though it ſeems he would have them baptized in another Notion. For when as in Queſtion 38 he makes the proper Subject of Baptiſme to *be profeſſing Believers and their Infant Seed, it is plain he intends Baptiſme to many, who* (according to his *Platform*) are not in *full Communion*, or may not come to the *Lords Table*, nay, *are not* (with him) *ſo much as joynted members of a particular or inſtituted Church*, but are only profeſſors of the Faith, Compare Queſtion *19 39,47 49.* And I ſuppoſe, there are Expreſſions to that purpoſe in other writings of his, which I have not now by me. The ſame thing may be Contained under the Expreſſion at the meeting of the *Savoy* in their *Confeſſion of Faith, Chap. 29. Theſ. 4.* [*the Infants of one or both believing Parents are to be baptized,*] uſing therein the words of the *Aſſemblies Confeſſion*, and we know in how large a Senſe they take the word [*believing*] when as they ſay in *Chap. 26. Theſ. 2.* The whole body of men throughout the world, profeſſing the Faith of the Goſpel, and obedience unto God by Chriſt, according unto it, not deſtroying their own Profeſſion by any errors, everting the *Foundation*, or *unholineſs* of Converſation, are, and may be called the *viſible Catholick Church of Chriſt.*

How plain is it, that *the perſons whoſe Children we would have baptized are profeſſing Believers according to Doctor Owens Expreſſions*, believing Parents in the Aſſemblies Senſe, and ſuch Profeſſors of the Faith of the Goſpel, and of obedience to God, as do not otherwiſe deſtroy that Profeſſion, all which (ſay the *Savoy meeting*) are of the *viſible Catholick Church of Chriſt.* And I ſuppoſe, *they would not have any part of Chriſts viſible Church left unbaptized.* 'Tis true they ſay, this *viſible Catholick Church of Chriſt* as ſuch, is not intruſted with the *Adminiſtration* of any Ordinance, but they may mean, as many do expreſsly hold, that *the perſon Adminiſtring Baptiſme muſt be an Officer in a particular Church, though the Subjects baptized may be of the Catholick Church.* However ſuch *Catholick Profeſſors* as they here deſcribe, are qualified for Baptiſme, If taking hold of the Covenant in a particular Church be (in their mind) further needful, ours do that.

You may hereby perceive, that *you ſtand almoſt alone*, while *you are againſt the baptizing of ſuch as are deſcribed in our fifth Propoſition.* Whether they ſhould be baptized as in a *Catholick*, or in *a particular Church ſtate*, is another Queſtion, And I Confeſs my ſelf not altogether

ſo

ſo peremptory in this Latter as I am in the thing it ſelf, [*viz.* that they ought to be baptized] yet ſtill I think that when all Stones are turned, it will come to this, that *all the baptized are, and ought to be under Diſcipline in particular Churches, your ſelf and thoſe few in the Miniſtry here, that diſſent, do bear a greater weight then it may be you are aware of.* For the People in the Country have in a manner no Arguments to object but this, ſome of your ſelves, ſome of the Miniſters are againſt it: I have lately in Courſe of Expoſition gone over *Exod. 24.* as formerly over *Gen 17. 9--14.* And the more I look into ſuch Texts as thoſe, the more awful they are to me, to make me fear, leſt we ſhould be wanting to do the will of God in this particular, and leſt the Lord *ſhould be thereby diſpleaſed.* And I am afraid that we do not our duty while we let a matter of ſo great moment, and of ſuch *publick* and *Practical Concernment* as this is, lye by from year to year, without uſing more means to bring it to an Iſſue, and to come to ſome ſettlement therein.

Thus you ſee with what Freedom I have opened ſomewhat of my heart to you about this matter, had I not been Confident of your *Candid Acceptation* thereof, I ſhould not have done it.

I do affectionately thank you for your Remembrance of me before the Lord, and deſire a Continued Share therein, hoping that I am not, and ſhall not be [in my poor meaſure] unmindful of you, whom I have a real reſpect for, and do heartily love in the Lord.

I am not without hope, that we may be yet of one mind before we dye, [And I am ready to think that we had been ſo here this, if you had been pleaſed to attend and purſue a *free Candid* and *through Debate* of matters *verbally*, and happily if ſome ſuch Courſe were yet taken amongſt us that live here about, it might effect an accord] But however I hope we ſhall meet there, *ubi Luthero cum Zuinglio optimè jam convenit.* The Lord direct all our paths for us, that we may be found walking in the wayes of Truth, and Peace, to his Glory, the good of others, and rejoycing of our own Souls in the day of Chriſt. In whom I am

Cambridge. December. 26. 1667.

Yours unfainedly
Jonathan Mitchel.

FINIS.